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Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī and Early Islamic Mysticism

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Abstract

The article analyzes some of the main teachings that are attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (died *ca* 245/859-860), a prominent figure in the formative period of the Sufi tradition. These teachings are reflected in the many sayings that are ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn in Sufi literature, in non-Sufi biographical dictionaries, and in several other medieval Islamic sources, all dating from the 4th/10th century onwards. The article demonstrates the historical problems related to the figure of Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, and, in this context, particular attention is given to the occult tendencies that are attributed to him in various writings.

Keywords

sufism, Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Egypt, North Africa, historiography, hagiography, biography, biographical dictionaries, Occult, magic, alchemy, Hermetic tradition, hermeticism, neoplatonism, shiism, ismailism

Résumé

L'article analyse quelques-uns des principaux enseignements attribués à Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (mort vers 245/859-860), une figure importante de la période de formation de la tradition soufie. Ces enseignements sont reflétés dans les nombreux propos attribués à Ḏū l-Nūn dans la littérature soufie, les dictionnaires biographiques non soufis et dans quelques autres sources islamiques médiévales, toutes datant au moins du IV^{e}/X^{e} siècle. L'article montre les problèmes historiques liés à la figure de Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī et, dans cette perspective, une attention particulière est portée aux tendances occultes qui lui sont attribuées dans de nombreux écrits.

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Mots clés

soufisme, Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Égypte, Afrique du Nord, historiographie, hagiographie, biographie, dictionnaires biographiques, occulte, magie, alchimie, tradition hermétique, hermétisme, néoplatonisme, chiisme, ismaélisme

Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī is an intriguing figure in the world of early Islamic mysticism. Considered by both medieval Muslim authors and modern scholars to have been one of the most influential teachers in the formative period of the Sufi tradition,[1] Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī ("the Egyptian") poses several challenging problems for the historian of early Islamic mystical thought. Unlike his contemporary Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī (died in 243/857), Ḏū l-Nūn did not put down his teachings in writing; and, contrary to the younger mystic Abū Muḥammad Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī (died in 283/896), none of Ḏū l-Nūn's disciples are known to have compiled any works based on the thought of their master.[2] What may be said to reflect Ḏū l-Nūn's original teachings are numerous sayings attributed to him which are scattered throughout Sufi literature, Non-Sufi biographical dictionaries and several other medieval Islamic sources, none of which predate the 4th/10th century. The difficulty

1 See, for example, ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf*, Cairo, Dār al-ṭibāʿa l-ʿāmira, 1287/[1870], p. 9, 25; ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, ed. ʿUmar b. Ġarāma l-ʿUmrawī, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1995, XVII, p. 400 (quoting Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī), p. 404 ʿAlī b. ʿUṭmān al-Ǧullābī l-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, ed. V. Zhukovskii, Leningrad, 1926, p. 124 (translated into English by R.A. Nicholson as *The Kashf al-Mahjub: the Oldest Persian Treatise on Ṣúfiism*, Leiden, Brill, 1911, p. 100); Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London, Luzac, 1905, I, p. 114; ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn Šarība, Cairo, Maktabat al-ḫānǧī, 1994, p. 363; Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra fī tartīb al-ziyāra*, Baghdad, Maktabat al-muṯannā, p. 234-235; al-Mubārak b. Muḥammad b. al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār min manāqib al-aḫyār*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2009, I, p. 486; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns min ḥaḍarāt al-quds*, ed. Ġulām ʿĪsā, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd and Kabīr al-Dīn Aḥmad, Calcutta, W. Nassau Lees, 1859, p. 36; R.A. Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sufiism", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 38 (1906), p. 309, 311.

2 On al-Muḥāsibī and al-Tustarī see J. Van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī: anhand von Übersetzungen aus seinen Schriften dargestellt und erläutert*, Bonn, Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1961; G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qurʾānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl al-Tustarī* (*d. 283/896*), Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1980. On the works on alchemy attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, see paragraph 2.10 of this article.

in reconstructing the authentic teachings of Ḍū l-Nūn is further exacerbated by the fact that a number of modern scholars, basing themselves on certain medieval Islamic works—notably non-Sufi ones—have ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn occult tendencies, portraying him as a magician and alchemist who was influenced by the ancient Hermetic tradition of Egypt. The high esteem in which Ḍū l-Nūn is held by both medieval and modern scholars, on the one hand, and the ambiguity surrounding his authentic teachings, on the other, merit a close examination. However, there is as yet not one single study by a western scholar devoted in its entirety to Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī and his role in early Islamic mysticism, though references to Ḍū l-Nūn and his teachings can be found in modern scholarly literature.[3]

The present article aims at examining some of Ḍū l-Nūn's main teachings as reflected in the anecdotes concerning him and particularly in the sayings which are attributed to him in Sufi literature and in non-Sufi biographical dictionaries. In addition, the article will demonstrate some of the historical problems related to the figure of Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, by focusing on the aforementioned occult tendencies which are ascribed to him in various sources.

1 A Short Biography of Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī

Not much is known about the early life of Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī. In fact, there is even uncertainty among medieval Muslim authors regarding his precise name (Ṯawbān, al-Fayḍ or Fayyāḍ) and *kunya* (Abū l-Fayḍ or Abū l-Fayyāḍ), as well as the name of his father (Ibrāhīm or Aḥmad). He is most commonly referred to in the sources as "Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī" or "Ḍū l-Nūn al-Iḫmīmī", "Ḍū l-Nūn" being a *laqab* (nickname) of his.[4] It is likewise unclear when Ḍū l-Nūn was

3 See the references throughout this article to the studies by R.A. Nicholson, Asín Palacios, L. Massignon, Smith, Arberry, A. Schimmel and J. Van Ess; see also J. Mojaddedi, "Dhū l-Nūn Abū l-Fayḍ al-Miṣrī", *EI*[3]. There are several modern studies in Arabic on Ḍū l-Nūn; see ʿA. al-Ḥ. Maḥmūd, *al-ʿĀlim al-ʿābid al-ʿārif bi-Llāh Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī*, Cairo, Dār al-rašād, 2004[2]; A.Ḍ. al-Madanī, *Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī wa-l-adab al-ṣūfī*, Cairo, Dār al-šurūq, 1973; K.M. Muḥammad ʿUwayḍa, *Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī al-ḥakīm al-zāhid*, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1996; M. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, *al-ʿĀrif bi-Llāh Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1996; M.Ḥ. Naššār, *Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī rāʾid al-taṣawwuf al-islāmī*, Cairo, Dār qabāʾ, 2006. Unfortunately, save for Maḥmūd's work, I have not had the chance yet to review these studies.

4 See Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya wa-yalīhi ḏikr al-niswa l-mutaʿabbidāt al-ṣūfiyyāt*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2003, p. 27; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 9; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1985, VIII, p. 393; Ibn ʿAsākir,

born,[5] and different dates are given for his death: 245/859-860 (perhaps in the month of ḏū l-qaʿda); the 2nd of ḏū l-qaʿda 246/861; or 248/862-863. Most authorities favor the date 245/859-860.[6]

Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq, XVII, p. 398, 400; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Beirut, Dār al-ṭaqāfa, 1968, I, p. 315; Ḫalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Šukrī Fayṣal, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1981, XI, p. 22; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī, Beirut, Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1987-2004, XVIII, p. 265 (the years 241-250); *id.*, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2004, VIII, p. 312-313; Muḥyī l-Dīn Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī fī manāqib Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī*, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, in *Rasāʾil Ibn al-ʿArabī*, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-intišār al-ʿarabī, 2002, III, p. 58-60; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 218; Abū l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf b. Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Šams al-Dīn, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1992, II, p. 383; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī l-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-aʿlamī li-l-maṭbūʿāt, 1971, II, p. 437; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 35; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn fī manāqib Ḏī l-Nūn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Maḥmūd, Cairo, Maktabat al-ādāb, 1991, p. 62-63.

5 According to some authorities, Ḏū l-Nūn was almost ninety years old when he died in the year 245, which would place his date of birth not long after 155/771-772; see, for example, al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 314; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī taʾrīḫ Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, Dār iḥyāʾ al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya, 1967, I, p. 512. Al-Ḏahabī (see, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 313) adds that Ḏū l-Nūn was born towards the end of al-Manṣūr's reign (*i.e.* between 155 and 158/775), yet elsewhere (see his *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 270) he writes that Ḏū l-Nūn was approximately seventy years old at the time of his death, which would mean that he was born around 175/791-792. See also L. Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism* (translated by B. Clark), Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1997, p. 142; M. Smith, "Ḏhu'l-Nūn, Abu'l-Fayḍ Thawbān b. Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī", *EI*[2]; and F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, Brill, 1967, I, p. 643, where the date 180/796 is given. M. Asín Palacios (in his *The Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Masarra and his Followers*, translated by E.H. Douglas and H.W. Yoder, Leiden, Brill, 1978, p. 165) states that Ḏū l-Nūn was born at the end of the second century. See also Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 218, and the editor's comment there in p. 219, n. 5.

6 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 27; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 9; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 397; ʿAlī b. Hibat Allāh b. Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl fī rafʿ al-irtiyāb ʿan al-muʾtalif wa-l-muḫtalif fī l-asmāʾ wa-l-kunā wa-l-ansāb*, Beirut, Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāṯ al-ʿarabī, III, p. 389; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 399, 441-442 (where the month ḏū l-qaʿda is given for the year 245); ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ʿUmar al-Bārūdī, Beirut, Dār al-ǧinān, 1988, I, p. 96 (ḏū l-qaʿda 245; cf. *ibid.*, p. 97 and Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Lubāb fī taḥḏīb al-ansāb*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1980, I, p. 35); ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī b. al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, ed. Maḥmūd Fāḫūrī, Beirut, Dār al-maʿrifa, 1985, IV, p. 321; *id.*, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīḫ al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1992, XI, p. 344; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab*

Ḏū l-Nūn was born in the town of Iḫmīm in the Ṣaʿīd (Upper Egypt). His father was a Nubian and a *mawlā* of Qurayš.[7] At some stage (presumably when he was still young), Ḏū l-Nūn moved to al-Fusṭāṭ,[8] perhaps in search of spirituality and religious education.[9] When and exactly how he began developing his own ascetical and mystical teachings remains unknown.[10]

On two separate occasions and for two different reasons, Ḏū l-Nūn fell afoul of the religious and political authorities of his time. On the first occasion, following the accession to power of the Caliph al-Wāṯiq bi-Llāh in the year 227/842, Muḥammad b. Abī l-Layṯ, the local Egyptian *qāḍī*, was ordered by the

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al-durrī, p. 63-64; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 504; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 318 (ḏū l-qaʿda 245, in addition to the years 246 and 248); al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 266 (ḏū l-qaʿda 245), 269-270 (245, the 2nd of ḏū l-qaʿda 246 and 248 are all mentioned); ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Aḥmad al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, Cairo, Maktabat wa-maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā l-Bābī l-Ḥalabī wa-awlādihi, 1954, I, p. 70; Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira*, II, p. 383 (ḏū l-qaʿda 245); al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 235; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 36; Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 168; J. Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen zur islamischen Theologie. 8. Der Kreis des Ḏū n-Nūn", *Die Welt des Orients*, XII (1981), p. 100, 102; cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, p. 643 and C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Leiden, Brill, 1943, I, p. 214 (the Supplement), who both favor the year 246/861.

7 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 27, where, based on Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kindī's lost work *Kitāb al-Mawālī min ahl Miṣr* / *al-mawālī l-Miṣriyyīn*, Ḏū l-Nūn himself is said to have been a *mawlā* of Qurayš. See also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 62 (where al-Kindī's book is entitled *Kitāb Aʿyān al-mawālī*); al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 9; Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, III, p. 389; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393, 397 (where Ḏū l-Nūn's father is said to have been a *mawlā* of a certain Isḥāq b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 399, 441; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 124; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 266; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 315; *id.*, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, p. 346; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 59-60; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 315-316; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 35; Smith, "Ḏhu'l-Nūn"; Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 100.

8 See al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 96-97; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 399, 401; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 60, 78-79; cf. J. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1992, II, p. 728.

9 See the story narrated in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 404-405 and al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 90-91. Ḏū l-Nūn may have revisited Iḫmīm in his later years; see Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ*, Beirut, Dār al-fikr, 1996, X, p. 175; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, Cairo, Dār al-kātib al-ʿarabī, 1967, X, p. 295 (*al-Isrāʾ*: 70); al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 15, 161.

10 I hope to publish in the near future a prosopographical study on Ḏū l-Nūn's teachers and disciples; see, for now, Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen".

Caliph to take harsh measures against all the religious scholars who did not comply with the official Abbasid doctrine concerning the created nature of the Koran. Many scholars in Egypt were forced to flee and go into hiding, or were otherwise imprisoned.[11] According to the relatively early author Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kindī (283/897-350/961),[12] Ḏū l-Nūn was among those who fled from this *miḥna* ("trial", "tribulation", "persecution"). However, he chose to return to Egypt, and, unlike many other scholars, was willing to acknowledge the official dogma.[13] Unsurprisingly, this report—attesting to a shameful episode in Ḏū l-Nūn's biography—is not found in any of the Sufi sources, which, nonetheless, do refer to Ḏū l-Nūn's belief in the uncreated nature of the Koran.[14]

The second occasion on which Ḏū l-Nūn experienced problems in his relationship with the religious and political authorities was during the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (232/847-247/861), most likely in the year 244/858-859 or in 245/859-860.[15] According to various sources, the Mālikī *fuqahāʾ* (jurists) in Egypt—presumably in al-Fusṭāṭ—[16] were displeased with Ḏū l-Nūn's mysti-

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11 See Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-Wulāt wa-kitāb al-quḍāt*, ed. R. Guest, Leiden, Brill, 1912, p. 451-453.

12 On him see F. Rosenthal, "Al-Kindī, Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Tudjībī", *EI*[2].

13 Al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-wulāt*, p. 453 (*wa-haraba Ḏū l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm al-Iḫmīmī ṯumma raʾā an yarǧiʿa fa-raǧaʿa ilayhi fa-waqaʿa fī yadihi wa-aqarra bi-l-miḥna*; and cf. the opposite expression on p. 451: *fa-haraba kaṯīr min al-nās wa-muliʾat al-suǧūn mimman ankara l-miḥna*); see also the version in Ibn Ḥaǧar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Rafʿ al-iṣr ʿan quḍāt Miṣr*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar, Cairo, Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1998, p. 404 (*wa-malaʾa al-suǧūn mimman lam yuǧib*; *wa-haraba Ḏū l-Nūn al-Iḫmīmī ṯumma ǧāʾa fa-waḍaʿa yadahu fī yadihi wa-aǧāba*); and cf. Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 99-100; *id.*, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, p. 478.

14 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 363 ([…] *wa-samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn yaqūlu l-Qurʾān kalām Allāh*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 403 (*samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn yaqūlu l-Qurʾān kalām Allāh ġayr maḫlūq*); al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 268; cf. Massignon, *Essay*, p. 143.

15 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 364. Al-Sulamī likewise mentions [2]44 as the year in which Ḏū l-Nūn was brought before al-Mutawakkil; see al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 266; see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 72, 207; and cf. Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 99-100; *id.*, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī*, p. 25; *id.*, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, p. 727-728; and Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya'* (*"Memorial of the Saints"*) *by Farid al-Din Attar*, transl. A.J. Arberry, London, Routledge-Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 87.

16 Al-Šaʿrānī writes that the *fuqahāʾ* in Iḫmīm were the ones to accuse Ḏū l-Nūn of *kufr* (nonbelief); see al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 15, 161. However, in another version of the

cal teachings, claiming that the latter constituted an innovation which did not concur with the tradition of the *ṣaḥāba* (Muḥammad's companions) and the *salaf* (the first generations of Muslims). Accordingly, they branded Ḏū l-Nūn as a heretic and nonbeliever (*zindīq*, *kāfir*).[17] Under the pressure of these local *ʿulamāʾ*, Ḏū l-Nūn was brought before the governor of Egypt, and was then sent to al-Mutawakkil's court in Samarrāʾ.[18] The stories found in the sources which treat of Ḏū l-Nūn's audience with the Caliph al-Mutawakkil are naturally colored with moralistic, didactic and dramatic tones.[19] Ḏū l-Nūn is portrayed

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story which is narrated by al-Šaʿrānī, Iḫmīm is not mentioned at all; see al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 267.

17 Some sources name ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam as the *faqīh* who "disapproved" of Ḏū l-Nūn's mystical teachings; see al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 267 (quoting from al-Sulamī's lost *Kitāb al-Miḥan*: *wa-fī* Kitāb al-Miḥan *li-l-Sulamī anna Ḏā l-Nūn awwal man takallama bi-baldatihi fī tartīb al-aḥwāl wa-maqāmāt ahl al-walāya ankara ʿalayhi ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam wa-kāna raʾīs Miṣr wa-kāna yaḏhabu maḏhab Mālik wa-li-ḏālika haǧarahu ʿulamāʾ Miṣr ḥattā šāʿa ḫabaruhu wa-annahu aḫḏaṭa ʿilman lam yatakallam fīhi l-salaf wa-haǧarūhu ḥattā ramawhu bi-l-zandaqa*); see also Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira*, II, p. 383. However, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, who was one of the leading Mālikī jurists in Egypt, died in 214/829 (see Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, III, p. 35-34). Perhaps it was one of his two sons who accused Ḏū l-Nūn of heresy and nonbelief, either ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (who was likewise a Mālikī jurist as well as a *ḥadīṯ* scholar and a historian; died in 257/870) or Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad (a Šāfiʿī jurist; died in 268/882); see *ibid.*, IV, p. 193-194; ʿUmar Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿǧam al-muʾallifīn*, Beirut, Maktabat al-muthannā, 1957, V, p. 150; VI, p. 67; X, p. 222-223 (where it is stated that the aforementioned Muḥammad was a Mālikī scholar); see also Ch. Melchert, "The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.", *Studia Islamica*, 83 (1996), p. 64, n. 77; and cf. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, p. 727-728. On Ḏū l-Nūn's accusation of being a *zindīq* and *kāfir*, see also ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Ṭaha ʿAbd al-Bāqī Surūr, Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-ḥadīṯa, 1960, p. 498; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 122 (*bāb al-futuwwa*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400; al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, XI, p. 24; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 15, 161; see also Muḥammad b. ʿAlī l-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, Cairo, al-Maṭbaʿa l-Miṣriyya, 1932, IV, p. 82.

18 See al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 267-268 (presumably quoting from al-Sulamī's *Kitāb al-Miḥan*); al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḫulafāʾ*, Beirut, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2003, p. 277-278; cf. *id.*, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, p. 512.

19 See, for instance, the vivid descriptions of Ḏū l-Nūn's imprisonment in al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, IV, p. 82, 223; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 122 (*bāb al-futuwwa*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 346; Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, Cairo, Dār al-šaʿb, n.d., IV, p. 679 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-akl*, *bāb* IV); Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 316; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 316; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I,

as the ideal pious believer who does not succumb to the political power and tyranny of the ruler, whereas al-Mutawakkil is presented as the righteous sovereign who comes to recognize the spiritual-religious supremacy of the *awliyāʾ*, the "friends of God".[20] Consequently, the anecdotes concerning the dialogue between Ḏū l-Nūn and al-Mutawakkil cannot be taken at face value.[21] Be that as it may, it seems that the Caliph was indeed impressed by Ḏū l-Nūn,[22] or at least was satisfied with Ḏū l-Nūn's response to the allegations made against him, for Ḏū l-Nūn eventually returned to Egypt, after a short visit to Baghdad.[23]

According to the various sources, Ḏū l-Nūn undertook many *siyāḥāt* (singular: *siyāḥa*) during his lifetime, *i.e.* journeys for ascetical and mystical purposes.[24] He is said to have wandered in greater Syria (al-Šām), including Ǧabal Lubnān,[25]

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p. 120-121 (= Arberry's translation, p. 91-92); Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 222. However, from one report, one may infer that Ḏū l-Nūn was not necessarily imprisoned; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337 (*lammā ḥumila Ḏū l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm ilā Ǧaʿfar al-Mutawakkil anzalahu fī baʿḍ al-dūr wa-awṣā bihi Zurāfa*); cf. Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 167.

20 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337-338; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 409-412; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 268-269; *id.*, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 314; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 72-77; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 487-488; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 72; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Beirut, Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāṯ al-ʿarabī, n.d., IV, p. 488 (chapter 560); Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 235-236; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 209-215. See also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 387-388 and Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 76-77 for a report on Ḏū l-Nūn's conversation with Zurāfa, al-Mutawakkil's *ḥāǧib* (on whom see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVIII, p. 450-451).

21 See also Melchert, "The Transition", p. 65 and n. 89.

22 See, in addition to the references in note 20, al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 9-10; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 316; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 121 (= Arberry's translation, p. 92).

23 See al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393, 396; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400-401, 440-441; al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 97; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, p. 344.

24 See, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 360; Yāqūt b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 1977, I, p. 124; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, p. 344; see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 434-435; and Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 56, 61, 250.

25 See Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 347-350; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 225-226; ʿAbd Allāh b. Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn fī ḥikāyāt al-ṣāliḥīn*, Cairo, al-Maṭbaʿa l-maymaniyya, 1307/[1889], p. 37-38, 112, 155-156.

Damascus,[26] Antioch,[27] Manbij[28] and Jerusalem,[29] as well as in Mecca,[30] Baṣra,[31] North Africa (al-Maġrib)[32] and even in Iran or Armenia.[33] He is likewise

26 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 398, 402; al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Naysābūrī, *ʿUqalāʾ al-maǧānīn*, ed. ʿUmar al-Asʿad, Beirut, Dār al-nafāʾis, 1987, p. 325, 330; see also Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 99, n. 1; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, p. 643.

27 See, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 340; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 235; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, p. 643. On Ḏū l-Nūn in Ǧabal al-Lukkām, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, X, p. 227; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 341, 344-346; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 218-219, 226-228, 230; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 34, 111-112, 230.

28 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 227.

29 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 345, 368; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 124, 248, 351-354; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 22, 38, 122; see also Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, Cairo, 1356/[1937], p. 22; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 126-127 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 101-102); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 193, 214-215, 217-218, 228-229. According to Ibn Baškuwāl (see *al-Ṣila*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Cairo, Dār al-kitāb al-Miṣrī, 1989, p. 551), Ḏū l-Nūn used to travel every year to Jerusalem. This seems, however, highly doubtful.

30 For reports concerning Ḏū l-Nūn's visit/s to Mecca and his *ḥaǧǧ* (pilgrimage) there, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 365, 370, 374-375; X, p. 175-176, 180; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, V, p. 214-215; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 438-439; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 348-350 (chapter 178); *id., al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 193-199, 201-202; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, II, p. 299; IV, p. 406-407, 416-417; *id.*, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, p. 345; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 21, 31-32, 219; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 88; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, p. 643.

31 Where he supposedly met the famous Saʿdūn *al-maǧnūn* ("The madman"); see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 370-372; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, II, p. 512-515; al-Naysābūrī, *ʿUqalāʾ al-maǧānīn*, p. 118-119, 120-121, 123, 126-128; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 222-225. It is doubtful whether Ḏū l-Nūn actually visited Baṣra; according to certain reports found in these sources, the alleged meeting between Saʿdūn and Ḏū l-Nūn took place in Mecca or in al-Fusṭāṭ.

32 See Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 337-338, 354; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 192, 198, 202-204, 217; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 38. On Ḏū l-Nūn in Tāhart, see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 87.

33 See Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 429, where al-Baǧǧa is mentioned, a town situated between Fāris and Iṣfahān (see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, I, p. 340, s.v. "Baǧǧa"); cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 213 ("al-Baḥḥa"). See also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 436: "[…] I saw Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī on the seashore, near Ṣaḫrat Mūsā (literally: "Moses's rock") […]" (*raʾaytu Ḏā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī ʿalā sāḥil al-baḥr ʿinda ṣaḫrat Mūsā*). According to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (*Muʿǧam al-buldān*, III, p. 339, s.v. "Šarwān"), Ṣaḫrat Mūsā is located near Šarwān, in the area of Darband. On Ḏū l-Nūn and Ṣaḫrat Mūsā see also Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 496. However, it does not seem likely that Ḏū l-Nūn visited these places, as there are no other reports which mention them.

depicted as wandering in the Sinai (*Tīh Banī Isrā'īl*) or in some other unnamed desert.[34] The numerous anecdotes concerning Ḏū l-Nūn's *sịyāḥāt* all contain similar motifs which are familiar from stories of other Sufi figures as well: Ḏū l-Nūn meets a certain ascetic, either a woman or a man, who piously worships God in the desert or in the mountains, on the seashore or on a river bank (such as that of the Nile), in a wadi or in a cave. After rebuking Ḏū l-Nūn for having disturbed them in their solitude and intimate communion with God, these wandering saints go on to answer Ḏū l-Nūn's questions regarding ascetical and mystical matters. The content of their teachings is reminiscent of Ḏū l-Nūn's own thought as reflected in the many sayings which are attributed to him in Sufi literature. The stories of Ḏū l-Nūn's encounters with wandering ascetics-mystics frequently end with the sudden disappearance or even death of the latter, resulting from their passionate love towards God and the terrible anguish that it generates.[35]

Notwithstanding these various *topoi*, and despite the legendary-hagiographic character of the anecdotes concerning Ḏū l-Nūn's *sịyāḥāt*, there is no reason to doubt that Ḏū l-Nūn did travel, and that this traveling took place in Egypt, greater Syria and *en route* to Mecca. One may assume that during his journeys, Ḏū l-Nūn met different pious men and women from whom he received ascetical and mystical teachings.[36] Furthermore, there is reason to believe that some of these men and women were Christian monks or ascetics.[37]

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34 See, for example, al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayrịyya*, p. 196; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Luma'*, p. 92; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 348, 368, 391; X, p. 175; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 406-407, 429-431; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 209-213; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 39-40, 195-196.

35 See, in addition to the references above in notes 24-34, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 340-341, 344, 346, 354-356, 380-381, 384; X, p. 183-184; al-Naysābūrī, *'Uqalā' al-maǧānīn*, p. 298; Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Ta'arruf li-maḏhab ahl al-Taṣawwuf*, ed. Aḥmad Šams al-Dīn, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1993, p. 20-21; 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, ed. Naǧāḥ 'Awaḍ Ṣiyām, Cairo, Dār al-Muqaṭṭam, 2009, p. 71; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, XV, p. 2776; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Ta'rīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393-394; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 406-407, 436; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 330-331, 355, 360-361, 374-375, 425, 427-431; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 190-229, 234-239, 253, 258, 266-268, 269-271; 'Aṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 114-115, 117 (= Arberry's translation, p. 88-89, 93-94), 123; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 21-22, 35, 39, 115-116, 156, 197-198, 218-219; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Aǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam fī šarḥ al-ḥikam*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥasb Allāh, Cairo, Dār al-ma'ārif, n.d., p. 596; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 76-90.

36 See especially al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 365; X, p. 180; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 338, 355; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 21, 197.

37 See, for instance, Kamāl al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, Cairo, Būlāq, 1284/[1867], II, p. 165; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 230; Ibn al-Zayyāt,

A number of traditions present Ḏū l-Nūn as showing interest in and having some knowledge of the *tawrāt* (the Torah).[38] Accordingly, the stories concerning Ḏū l-Nūn's *siyāḥāt* in greater Syria and Egypt can also be viewed as reflecting the passage of ascetical and mystical traditions from late antiquity to the early, nascent world of Islamic mysticism.[39]

Ḏū l-Nūn had three brothers: al-Hamaysaʿ, ʿAbd al-Bāriʾ and Ḏū l-Kifl.[40] One report suggests that Ḏū l-Nūn was married to Maymūna l-Sawdāʾ ("the black woman"), a pious ascetic (*ʿābida*) who was known for her passionate love of God and hence for being "mad" (*maǧnūna*).[41] However, one should not lend this tradition any historical credibility, as it belongs to the category of stories

al-Kawākib al-sayyāra, p. 116-117; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 275-277. See also the expressions *rahbāniyyat al-qalaq* ("the monasticism of restlessness") and *rahbāniyyat al-ḫāšiʿīn* ("the monasticism of the humble ones") in the sayings and prayers attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 357-358 (cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 521, chapter 560; *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 169), as well as the expression *ruhbān min al-rahābīn* ("a monk among monks") in *id.*, p. 371; and see also S. Sviri, "*Wa-Rahbāniyyatan ibtadaʿūhā*: an Analysis of Traditions Concerning the Origin and Evaluation of Christian Monasticism", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990), p. 195-208.

38 See, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 363; X, p. 82; Ibn Baškuwāl, *al-Ṣila*, p. 551; see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 109; al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, p. 22 (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 157-158). In one anecdote (see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 356; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 360-361; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 215), a *ʿābid* whom Ḏū l-Nūn meets in Syria (*Bilād al-Šām*) utters the formula *quddūs quddūs quddūs*, similar to the Hebrew *qadōš qadōš qadōš* known from Isaiah 6, 3 and from the Jewish prayer book.

39 See also M. Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East*, Amsterdam, Philo Press, 1931; reprinted as *The Way of the Mystics: the Early Christian Mystics and the Rise of the Sufis*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1978.

40 See al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 397; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 441; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 315; *id.*, *al-Muntaẓam*, XI, p. 346. Cf. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400, where the name ʿAbd al-Ḫāriq (read: al-Ḫāliq) is mentioned instead of al-Hamaysaʿ; and see also *Taʾrīḫ ʿulamāʾ ahl Miṣr* by Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān (died in 416/1025; quoted in Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 102-103), where the name ʿAbd Ḏī l-ʿArš appears instead of al-Hamaysaʿ. See also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 60: the author suggests that ʿAbd al-Ḫāliq was perhaps also called al-Hamaysaʿ, and adds that Ḏū l-Kifl's name was Maymūn, Ḏū l-Kifl being a *laqab* of his (see also Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 35 and al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 63, where Ḏū l-Kifl's name is said to have been either Sālim or Maymūn). On the role of these brothers and their descendants in preserving and transmitting Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings, see Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen".

41 See Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 40.

in which Ḏū l-Nūn is said to have met other figures who, like Maymūna, were madly in love with God.[42]

Ḏū l-Nūn died in al-Ǧīza, where he apparently had resided and taught,[43] and was buried in al-Fusṭāṭ, in al-Qarāfa l-Ṣuġrā.[44] It seems that by this time he had become a well-known religious figure in al-Fusṭāṭ and its environs, for it is said that a great number of people attended his funeral.[45] For centuries later, Ḏū l-Nūn's tomb (*mašhad Ḏī l-Nūn*, *turbat Ḏī l-Nūn*) was venerated and served as a site for pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) and a center for ascetical-mystical activity (*maʿbad Ḏī l-Nūn*) which attracted well-known Sufi Shaykhs.[46]

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42 For such stories, see, for example, al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 72 (*bāb al-ḫawf*); al-Naysābūrī, *ʿUqalāʾ al-maǧānīn*, p. 167-168, 228, 241, 342; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 330, 344-345, 353-354; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 222-229; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 37-38, 121. Note that according to the tradition related by Ibn al-Zayyāt himself (*al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 40: *yā Ḏā l-Nūn inna ʿadīlaka fī l-ǧanna Maymūna l-Sawdāʾ*, and 41: *ṯumma qālat yā Ḏā l-Nūn laysa l-mawʿid hāhunā mawʿidī wa-mawʿiduka l-ǧanna*), Ḏū l-Nūn did not actually marry al-Maymūna, since their marriage was to take place only in heaven; cf. Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 100, n. 16, p. 104.

43 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 386-387; cf. Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 221 and n. 5; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 488.

44 See Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 318; Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira*, II, p. 383; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 219; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 321 (where Ḏū l-Nūn is said to have been buried in *Maqābir ahl al-maʿāfir*; see also Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 504; on the Maʿāfir tribe and Qarāfa, see the reference below to Yāqūt). On al-Qarāfa, where many eminent men were buried, including religious scholars such as al-Šāfiʿī, see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, IV, p. 317 (s.v. "al-Qarāfa").

45 See al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 397; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 441; al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 97; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 321; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 504; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 269; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 72-73. On the miraculous green birds (or *ḫafāfiš*, "bats", according to one version) which hovered above Ḏū l-Nūn's body during his funeral, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 363-364; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400, 442; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 125 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 100); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 98-99; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 438; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 235; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, I, p. 512; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 134; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 36.

46 Ḏū l-Nūn's tomb was venerated at least from Ibn ʿAsākir's time (12th century) onwards, if not before; see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ǧubayr, *Riḥlat Ibn Ǧubayr*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, n.d., p. 23; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XXX, p. 188-189 (the years 441-460); XLIV, p. 285-286 (the years 611-620); XLV, p. 128-129 (the years 621-630); XLVI, p. 138 (the years 631-640); Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 108-109, 233, 236-237, 321; Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira*, II, p. 383; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 318; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 219; Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb

2 Ḍū l-Nūn's Teachings as Reflected in Sufi Literature and in Non-Sufi Biographical Dictionaries

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this article, Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī did not put down his ascetical and mystical teachings in writing, nor did his disciples compose any works based on their master's thought.[47] A number of treatises on alchemy and magic which are ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn are, according to several scholars, apocryphal.[48] The seemingly authentic teachings of Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī are preserved in the numerous sayings which are attributed to him and which are found in Sufi compilations, dating from the 4th/10th century onwards, and in various non-Sufi sources, primarily biographical dictionaries. These sayings, scattered throughout Islamic literature, do not constitute a systematic body of thought. The ascetical and mystical concepts that are dealt with in these sayings are hardly ever given a clear-cut definition; they are rather explained in diverse ways and are approached from different perspectives. In addition, many of the sayings attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn are in fact prayers, sermons and exhortations.[49] On the whole, they reveal a poetical, expressive, figurative and emotional approach to religious-mystical issues, bereft of any theological considerations or speculative methods.[50] Moreover, in their present form, the sayings ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn cannot be said to accurately represent Ḍū l-Nūn's very own words; they are rather the product of a

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al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Nağīb Muṣṭafā Fawwāz and Ḥikmat Kašlī Fawwāz, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2004, XXIX, p. 87; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, I, p. 515; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 106; Massignon, *Essay*, p. 142, n. 412, p. 143, n. 420; Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, p. 728.

47 I have found no evidence for Massignon's claim that Ḍū l-Nūn's sayings and the anecdotes concerning him "were written down by his disciples in Egypt" or "by his admirers in Baghdad"; see Massignon, *Essay*, p. 143. However, the Egyptian disciples of Ḍū l-Nūn who are mentioned by Massignon (Muhāğir b. Mūsā and Aḥmad b. Ṣabīḥ/Ṣubayḥ al-Fayyūmī) may have indeed transmitted their master's teachings orally. Note that the book entitled *Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī: al-tafsīr al-ʿirfānī li-l-Qurʾān al-karīm* (ed. Maḥmūd al-Hindī, Cairo, Maktabat Madbūlī, 2007) is a collection of sayings by Ḍū l-Nūn which are found in medieval Sufi literature and which are arranged by the author according to the suras of the Koran.

48 See the references below in n. 185.

49 See, for example, Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 87-98, 158-172, 265; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 186-208.

50 See also Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 168; Massignon, *Essay*, p. 143-144; Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 100; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 45-46. On Ḍū l-Nūn's insufficient knowledge in the field of Islamic theology (*kalām*), see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 386.

long process which included both oral transmission and written-literary formulation. Nonetheless, by culling the many sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn from the different sources and by comparing them to each other, one is able to form a general idea of the main issues with which Ḏū l-Nūn was concerned as well as his basic notions regarding them.[51]

2.1 *Asceticism*

It seems that already during his own lifetime, Ḏū l-Nūn was primarily known as an ascetic, a *zāhid*, and is thus called in many non-Sufi biographical dictionaries.[52] Sufi literature abounds with sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn which emphasize the importance of maintaining an ascetic lifestyle when travelling on the mystical path. According to these sayings, a person who possesses true religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) should despise this world and take no heed of it.[53] The true mystic lives in poverty (*faqr*), does not mind hunger

51 For general surveys of Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings, see Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 309-310; Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 168-171; Massignon, *Essay*, p. 143-147; Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism*, p. 230-236; A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 42-47. Special mention should be made of two relatively late medieval works which are dedicated to the life and sayings of Ḏū l-Nūn: Ibn al-ʿArabī's *al-Kawkab al-durrī fī manāqib Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī* (*The Shining Star Concerning the Virtues of Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī*, translated into French by R. Deladrière, *La Vie merveilleuse de Dhû-l-Nûn l'Egyptien: d'après le traité hagiographique al-Kawkab al-durrî fî manâqib Dhî-l-Nûn al-Misrî, "L'astre éclatant des titres de gloire de Dhû-l-Nûn l'Égyptien"*, Paris, Sindbad, 1988), and al-Suyūṭī's *al-Maknūn fī manāqib Ḏī l-Nūn* (*What is Hidden Concerning the Virtues of Ḏū l-Nūn*). On al-Suyūṭī's work, see A.J. Arberry, "A Biography of Dhul-Nūn Al-Miṣrī", in *Arshi Presentation Volume* (= *Nazm-i Arshi*), eds M. Ram and M.D. Ahmad, New Delhi, 1965, p. 11-27; Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 100-101. The works of both Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Suyūṭī mostly derive from earlier sources, namely, Sufi compilations and non-Sufi biographical dictionaries. Note, however, that Ibn al-ʿArabī's work (especially from p. 230 *sqq*) does contain various traditions which are not found in the eastern sources.

52 See al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 96; Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, III, p. 389; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 398-399, 405, 413, 441; al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 312; see also al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, X, p. 295 (*al-Isrāʾ*, 70); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 249; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437.

53 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 34; see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 335, 372; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 158, 259. On the importance of *zuhd*, see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 105-107, 120, 167, 219; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 490, 500; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 114-115 (= Arberry's translation, p. 88-89); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 86-87, 106. For various definitions of *zuhd*, see al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 261; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV,

(*ǧūʿ*) and cares not for the pleasures that this world has to offer.[54] Ḏū l-Nūn is reported as saying, "wisdom does not reside in a full stomach",[55] for being full inevitably leads one to acts of legal disobedience (*maʿṣiya*).[56] His yearning or longing (*šawq*) to see God in the afterlife produces in the mystic an aversion to this world and an attraction to death (*ḥubb al-mawt*, *istilḏāḏ al-mawt*).[57] The love of God can only be fully attained when man utterly detests this world and relinquishes all his worldly expectations.[58] Carnal desires or lust (*šahwa*, plural: *šahawāt*) and the evil inclination of man (*hawā*) are obstacles on the mystical path and should be fought against and overcome.[59]

Retreat and solitude (*ḫalwa*, *waḥda*) are prerequisites for achieving *iḫlāṣ* (inner purity or sincerity) and *ṣidq* (veracity, honesty),[60] as well as for enjoying intimacy with God (*uns*) and conversing secretly with Him (*munāǧāt*).[61]

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p. 361; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 180. On asceticism in general, see R. Gramlich, *Weltverzicht: Grundlagen and Weisen islamischer Askese*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1997.

54 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 338, 356-357, 362. On poverty and the figure of the *fuqarāʾ* ("the poor ones"), see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 145, 147 (*bāb al-faqr*), 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*; cf. Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 234); al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 151; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 416; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125, 128; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 518, 521 (chapter 560); Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 338; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 489, 500; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70.

55 Al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10 (*lā taskunu l-ḥikma maʿida muliʾat ṭaʿāman*); see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 431; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 84, 110, 165; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 119-120 (= Arberry's translation, p. 97-98), 124.

56 Al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 343; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VIII, p. 1495 (*Kitāb Kasr al-šahwatayni*); al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 72.

57 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341-342; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 415, 431; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 107, 138, 170; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 182. *Šawq* is often associated with eschatological motifs; see, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 392; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 137.

58 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 392; see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 245; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 104, 115, 131.

59 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 33; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 58 (*bāb al-muǧāhada*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 416, 420; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 263 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 208); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 128; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 518, 521 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 163, 170; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 127-128; see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 332, 345, 357; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 489, 496.

60 On these terms see the discussion in the next section.

61 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 59 (*bāb al-ḫalwa wa-l-ʿuzla*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 342, 346, 354-356, 359, 362, 376-377; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 415, 438; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 223; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VI, p. 1049 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-ʿuzla*, *bāb* 2); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126; Ibn

Abstaining from sleep at night (*sahar*) in order to pray (*tahaǧǧud*, *qiyām al-layl*) and remember God (*ḏikr*) is likewise highly commended in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn.[62]

2.2 *The Ethical-Psychological Dimension of Man and the Struggle Against the Lower Self* (nafs)

Man's ethical conduct and his inner, psychological realm play a central role in Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings as reflected in the numerous sayings ascribed to him. According to these sayings, man's fiercest enemy is the *nafs*, his lower self or ego. The latter is not only the source of sins and evil desires, but also forms a challenging obstacle on the mystical path: the further one advances in his mystical journey and the greater his ascetical-spiritual achievements, the prouder his *nafs* becomes. The *nafs* is thus a most dangerous, albeit subtle veil (*ḥiǧāb*) standing between the mystic and God.[63] Accordingly, man is obliged to scrupulously inspect his *nafs*, to reckon with it or to call it to account (*muḥāsabat al-nafs*);[64] he must oppose it and conquer it.[65] Only when the mystic fully realizes—thanks to Divine succor—the baseness (*ḏull*) of his *nafs*, is he granted might and power (*ʿizz*).[66]

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al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 319-320, 338; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 127-128; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 220; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 181.

62 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 362; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, IV, p. 640 (*Kitāb Tartīb al-awrād*, *bāb* 2); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 338 (chapter 178); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 170; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḥtār*, I, p. 491, 500; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 234.

63 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 28; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 352; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 250-251 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 200); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 124; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 37; see also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 182, where the *nafs* is defined as an idol (*ṣanam*). On the *nafs* see also Van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī*, index, s.v. "*nafs*"; S. Sviri, "The Self and its Transformation in Ṣūfism", in *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*, eds D. Shulman and G.G. Stroumsa, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 195-215; *id.*, *The Taste of Hidden Things: Images on the Sufi Path*, Inverness, The Golden Sufi Center, 1997, index, s.v. "*nafs*".

64 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 373; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XV, p. 2746 (*Kitāb al-Murāqaba wa-l-muḥāsaba*); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 124, 132; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 171; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḥtār*, I, p. 501.

65 Al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 234; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 83 (*bāb muḥālafat al-nafs*), 157 (*bāb al-ṣuḥba*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 382; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 416, 419-420; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, V, p. 968 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-ulfa*, *bāb* 2); al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, p. 96; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125, 130, 132-133.

66 Al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 58 (*bāb al-muǧāhada*: *mā aʿazza Llāh ʿabdan bi-ʿizz huwa aʿazz lahu min an yadullahu ʿalā ḏull nafsihi wa-mā aḏalla Llāh ʿabdan bi-ḏull huwa aḏall lahu min an yaḥǧubahu ʿan ḏull nafsihi*); see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX,

In the sayings attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn, *iḫlāṣ* (inner purity or sincerity) is depicted as a crucial attribute for the believer. One must be extremely careful to worship God with pure intentions, seeking neither to impress nor satisfy other human beings nor to please and magnify one's own *nafs*. Hence, *iḫlāṣ* is best achieved when man worships God in his solitude rather than in the company of men, and only when he serves God irrespective of the will and desires of his proud ego.[67] *Ṣidq* (veracity and honesty) too is a vital trait for the mystic in his spiritual path. Ḍū l-Nūn is quoted as saying, "veracity is God's sword on earth: it severs everything against which it is applied".[68]

Contrary to those who externalize their asceticism and boast of their religious accomplishments, the true mystic hides his spiritual achievements from the eyes of others. Ḍū l-Nūn is reported to have said, "He who possesses Divine knowledge (*al-ʿārif*) is externally dirty but internally pure, whereas the ascetic (*al-zāhid*) is externally pure but internally dirty".[69] One should not

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p. 374; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 415; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125-126; Ibn ʿAǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 626; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 37.

67 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30, 32; cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359, 395. On *iḫlāṣ*, see also *ibid*., p. 332, 361-362, 374, 378; X, p. 243; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 112 (*bāb al-iḫlāṣ*); al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 87; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 428-430; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 130; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 489, 499; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, III, p. 98 (cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 77); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 87, 114-115, 127-128, 166-167; *id.*, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 518 (chapter 560).

68 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 32 (*al-ṣidq sayf Allāh fī arḍihi mā wuḍiʿa ʿalā šayʾ illā qaṭaʿahu*); see also al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 288; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 114 (*bāb al-ṣidq*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 395; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 126 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 101); al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 544; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 125; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 220. On *ṣidq* and those who possess it (*ṣādiq*, plural: *ṣādiqūn*; *ṣiddīq*, plural: *ṣiddīqūn*), see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 338, 340-341, 345, 347, 349-351, 354, 356, 359, 378, 380, 384, 394; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 77 (and cf. al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, III, p. 98); al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 407, 424, 428-430; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIV, p. 2727 (*Kitāb al-Niyya wa-l-iḫlāṣ wa-l-ṣidq*, *bāb* 3); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 128-129; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 494, 497; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 317, 338; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 164, 168, 181, 198, 264, 271, 274; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 110; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 220.

69 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359 (*al-ʿārif mutalawwiṭ al-ẓāhir ṣāfī l-bāṭin wa-l-zāhid ṣāfī l-ẓāhir mutalawwiṭ al-bāṭin*), p. 395; for similar statements see also al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 32; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 353; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 428-429; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 318; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 133-134; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 139, 144; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 499, 502; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 123.

"falsely claim to possess Divine knowledge (*maʿrifa*), nor turn the practice of asceticism (*zuhd*) into a livelihood, nor become attached to religious devotion [rather than to God Himself]".[70] Before undertaking ascetic endeavors such as withdrawal from society or seclusion (*ʿuzla*), one must "withdraw" from one's *nafs*, that is, he should perform these acts in order to please God alone rather than his own self.[71]

The mystical path as reflected in the numerous sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn comes very close to that which would later be delineated by the *malāmatiyya*, those Muslim mystics who adhered to *malāma* ("blame").[72] As stated above, according to the statements attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, the ideal mystic internalizes and conceals his religious and ascetic activities as well as his spiritual and mystical achievements, so as not to give himself unwarranted publicity (*šuhra*).[73] He worships God in private, far from the eyes of others, safeguarding his mystical secret which pertains mainly to the love between him and his

70 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 28 ([...] *iyyāka takūna bi-l-maʿrifa muddaʿiyan aw takūna bi-l-zuhd muḥtarifan aw takūna bi-l-ʿibāda mutaʿalliqan*); cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 350; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 433; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 351 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 274); al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70. On false claims to mystical knowledge and mystical achievements (*iddiʿāʾ*, *daʿwā*), see also al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 31; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 172 (*bāb al-maḥabba*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 353; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126-127, 131; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 95, 136, 155, 164, 171; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 503-504.

71 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 352, 368; see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 60 (*bāb al-ḥalwa wa-l-ʿuzla*), 66 (*bāb al-zuhd*); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 132; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 497.

72 On the *malāmatiyya*, see S. Sviri, "Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and the *Malāmatī* Movement in Early Sufism", in *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origins to Rūmī*, ed. L. Lewisohn, London, Khaniqahi Nimatullahi, 1993, p. 583-613.

73 See al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, III, p. 98 (cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 77); al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIV, p. 2643, 2680 (*Kitāb al-Maḥabba*); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 123. Nicholson ("A Historical Enquiry", p. 311), perhaps basing himself on al-Huǧwīrī (see *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 125, = Nicholson's translation, p. 100; see also ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 114), writes that Ḏū l-Nūn "was a Malámatí, *i.e.* he concealed his piety under a pretended contempt for the law [...]". The term *malāma* indeed appears in one statement attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, yet it is impossible to know whether Ḏū l-Nūn himself actually used this very term; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 356: "[...] slay [or: 'subdue', 'chastise'] your *nafs* with the weapon of blame [...]" (*qāla Ḏū l-Nūn li-fatā min al-nussāk yā fatā ḫuḏ li-nafsika bi-silāḥ al-malāma*); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 521 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 169, 255-256.

Lord.[74] Focusing on his own vices (*ʿuyūb*) rather than on those of others, the ideal mystic is compassionate, forgiving and kind towards his fellow men; he avoids all sorts of confrontations or disputes (*ḫilāf, ǧidāl*)[75] and always maintains silence (*ṣamt*).[76]

The virtue of humbleness (*tawāḍuʿ*) is emphasized in many of the sayings ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn. True humbleness results from a feeling of contempt towards the lower self, due to its many vices; by succumbing to God's greatness and power, man is able to "melt down" his lower self and thus purify it.[77]

Other religious-psychological traits that figure in the statements and poems attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn are *tawakkul* (trust in God),[78] *riḍā* (contentment with

74 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 334, 337, 339, 355. On the need to perform acts of religious obedience (*ṭāʿa*) in private, see Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 519 (chapter 560); Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 490. On the mystical secret, see al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 31; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 347-348, 369, 375, 377, 383, 385, 390-391; X, p. 243; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 433-434, 439-440; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 348 (chapter 178); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 190-191; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 320, 324; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 219; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 223.

75 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 419-420, 423-425, 432; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 511, 513 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 153, 162-163, 167, 171; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 317-318; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 489-490, 495, 498; see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 382-383; X, p. 242; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 126 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 101).

76 On the importance of silence, see al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 34; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 68 (*bāb al-ṣamt*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 350, 360-361, 376, 380, 392; X, p. 3; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 414, 419, 433, 440; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, XVIII, p. 198 (*al-Taḥrīm*, 8); ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. Hibat Allāh b. Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, Dār iḥyāʾ al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya, 1959-1964, XI, p. 214; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 129; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 512-513, 518-519, 521 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 110, 152, 164, 167, 172, 198; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 318, 321, 338; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 490, 502, 504; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 267; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 22, 156; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 87, 117.

77 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 29-30; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 368-369; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 253; Ibn ʿAǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 505. On the importance of *tawāḍuʿ*, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 362, 376; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 412, 420, 430; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 512-513 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 115-116, 163; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71.

78 The importance of placing one's trust in God is best reflected in the famous story of Ḍū l-Nūn's repentance or spiritual awakening (*tawba*); see al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10, 203; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 125; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 65; cf. ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 115-116 (= Arberry's translation, p. 89-90). On *tawakkul*, see also

God's decree),[79] *ṣabr* (forbearance in the face of worldly tribulations as well as the hardships of Divine love)[80] and *šukr* (gratitude for God's incessant graces).[81]

2.3 *Divine Love*

One of the most recurring themes in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn is the love (*ḥubb, maḥabba*) between the mystic and God. It is said that following his death, a miraculous inscription appeared on Ḏū l-Nūn's grave: "Ḏū l-Nūn, God's loved one (*ḥabīb Allāh*), has died from yearning (*šawq*), the victim of God (*qatīl Allāh*)". This legendary tradition is perhaps an early testimony to

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al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 33; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 78; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, III, p. 28; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 89-90 (*bāb al-tawakkul*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 350, 362, 372, 380, 395; X, p. 104; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 510; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, XI, p. 201; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 425-426, 435; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIII, p. 2519 (*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa-l-tawakkul*); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 129, 131-132; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 338; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 108-109, 186-187, 242-243; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 111-112; see also B. Reinert, *Die Lehre von Tawakkul in der klassischen Sufik*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1968.

79 See al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 80; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341-342, 366; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 120; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 511; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 414, 416; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 124-125, 130; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 130, 251. A closely related concept is *qunūʿ*/*qanāʿa* (satisfaction); see al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 335; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 87-88 (*bāb al-qanāʿa*); al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 170; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 277; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 421; al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, p. 22; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, XI, p. 199; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 131.

80 Al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 99 (*bāb al-ṣabr*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 332, 336, 345, 350, 356, 362-363; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 415-416, 434, 438; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, II, p. 174 (al-Baqara, 155); XX, p. 161 (al-ʿĀdiyāt, 6); al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIII, p. 2408 (*Kitāb al-Faqr wa-l-zuhd*); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 111-112, 215.

81 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 332-333, 337, 342-343, 350-351, 356, 367, 388; X, p. 241; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 419, 422-423, 431, 433; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, I, p. 398 (al-Baqara, 52); XVII, p. 54 (al-Ḏāriyāt, 50); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 512-513, 518 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 89, 112, 163; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 494, 497, 504; Ibn ʿAǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 596; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 239; see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 74 (*bāb al-raǧāʾ*), 164 (*bāb aḫwālihim ʿinda l-ḫurūǧ min al-dunyā*); Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 222. Note that in several of these sayings, the terms *mazīd* and *ziyāda* (increase, addition, augmentation) or the verbs derived from the Arabic root z.y.d. are linked to the concept of *šukr*. On *mazīd*, see M. Ebstein and S. Sviri, "The So-Called *Risālat al-ḥurūf* (*Epistle on Letters*) Ascribed to Sahl al-Tustarī and Letter Mysticism in al-Andalus", *Journal Asiatique* 299/1 (2011), p. 248.

the centrality of Divine love in the teachings of Ḏū l-Nūn.[82] The love between the mystics and God is so significant that it sets the mystics apart from the common believers, in both this world and the world to come: "He whose aim [*qiblatuhu*, literally: the direction of his prayer] is His worship (*ʿibādatuhu*), his recompense [at the end of time] (*fa-dīnuhu*) will be His paradise; whereas he whose aim is His love, his recompense [at the end of time] will be to look at Him (*al-naẓar ilayhi*)".[83]

The true lover of God is so absorbed in his object of love, that eventually he loses awareness of love itself. Ḏū l-Nūn is quoted as saying, "the pure love of God which is not turbid is when love falls from the heart and the organs, until there is no love [left] in them and things are [only] through God and for God. This is the lover of God".[84] Many sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn describe the mystic's love of God as an overwhelming, passionate and even erotic experience. The hearts (*qulūb*) of God's loved ones, His friends (the *awliyāʾ*), "arrive at the ocean of His love and draw from it a plentiful drink";[85] "When He wished to have them drink from the cup of His love, He gave them to taste from His lusciousness and had them lick His sweetness".[86]

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82 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400 (*wa-lammā māta wuǧida ʿalā qabrihi maktūban māta Ḏū l-Nūn ḥabīb Allāh min al-šawq qatīl Allāh*); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 99; cf. al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 125 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 100); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 134; Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 36.

83 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 425 (*qāla Ḏū l-Nūn man qiblatuhu ʿibādatuhu fa-dīnuhu ǧannatuhu wa-man qabilahu* [*sic*; read: *qiblatuhu*] *ḥubbuhu fa-dīnuhu l-naẓar ilayhi*); note that the phrase "his recompense [at the end of time]" may also be rendered "his religion". In al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 377, a distinction is drawn between *ḥubb* and *wudd*/*widād*: the latter term, which also denotes the love of God, is unique (*ḫāṣṣ*) to the chosen mystics, whereas the former is shared by all other believers as well (*al-ḥubb li-Llāh ʿāmm wa-l-wudd li-Llāh ḫāṣṣ li-anna kull al-muʾminīn yaḏūqūna ḥubbahu wa-yanālūnahu wa-laysa kull muʾmin yanālu wuddahu*; see also Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 501; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 134-135; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 226). However, in other sayings or poems ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn, this disctinction is not maintained; see, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 378; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 375; and cf. *ibid*., p. 430; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 40; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 212, 221.

84 Al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 88 (*ḥubb Allāh al-ṣāfī llaḏī lā kudra fīhi suqūṭ al-maḥabba ʿan al-qalb wa-l-ǧawāriḥ ḥattā lā yakūna fīhā l-maḥabba wa-takūna l-ašyāʾ bi-Llāh wa-li-Llāh fa-ḏālika l-muḥibb li-Llāh*); cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 247.

85 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 338 (*waradat qulūbuhum ʿalā baḥr maḥabbatihi fa-ġtarafat minhu riyyan min al-šarāb*); cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 449; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 75, 256; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 119.

86 Al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 449 (*qāla Ḏū l-Nūn raḥimahu Llāh lammā arāda an yasqiyahum min kaʾs maḥabbatihi ḏawwaqahum min laḏāḏatihi wa-alʿaqahum min ḥalāwatihi*). For

At the same time, the experience of mystical love also entails much suffering: the road to achieving a true, intimate relationship with God is long and difficult to traverse, and, in addition, the mystic is obliged to conceal his Divine love, a fact which adds to his feeling of distress and angst. Hence the images of illness and disease (*dā'*, plural: *adwā'*; or: *suqm*, plural: *asqām*), on the one hand, and remedy, cure (*dawā'*, plural: *adwiya*) and the figure of the physician (*ṭabīb*), on the other, in the sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn. "God has servants (*'ibād*) whose hearts he has filled with His pure, unalloyed love, and whose spirits he has aroused with the longing to see Him [...]"; God is the "physician [who cures] their diseases".[87] Yet "when the heart is sick (*'alīl*), the sorrows (*al-aḥzān*) and the diseases wander about within it, and the heart has no cure due to the root of the diseases which wander about [within it]. And when the sorrows are brought in, his disease becomes prolonged so that he complains about it to Him".[88] Numerous poems attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn himself

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the image of drinking, particularly from the cup of love, passionate love (*'išq*) or mystical certitude (*yaqīn*), see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 336, 341-342, 358, 369-370, 380, 385, 391; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Ta'rīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 407, 417; al-Naysābūrī, *'Uqalā' al-maǧānīn*, p. 127; al-Suhrawardī, *'Awārif*, p. 508; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā'*, XI, p. 2092 (*Kitāb al-Tawba*); 'Aṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 126; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 346 (chapter 178); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 91, 179, 206, 216, 248, 270-271; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 355, 407-408, 429; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 31-32, 156, 218-219; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 491, 494, 498; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 238-239; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 76, 78.

87 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 339 (*sami'tu Ḏā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī yaqūlu inna li-Llāh 'ibādan mala'a qulūbahum min ṣafā' maḥḍ maḥabbatihi wa-hayyaǧa arwāḥahum bi-l-šawq ilā ru'yatihi*; [...] *wa-ṭabīb asqāmihim* [...]); cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 181.

88 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 364 (*al-qalb iḏā kāna 'alīlan ǧālat al-aḥzān wa-l-asqām fīhi laysa li-l-qalb ma'a mā yaǧūlu min aṣl al-asqām dawā' wa-in yastaǧlib al-aḥzān man istaǧlabahā yaṭūlu suqmuhu li-yaškuwahu wa-yaškuwa ilayhi*); cf. Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 424; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 208; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 80, 120-122. On the pain of love and for the images of illness, remedy and the figure of the physician, see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 70 (*bāb al-ḫawf*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 336, 341, 344, 361, 365, 374-375, 381, 385; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Ta'rīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393-394; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 407, 419; al-Naysābūrī, *'Uqalā' al-maǧānīn*, p. 228, 241; 'Aṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 125, 132; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 338 (chapter 178); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 94, 204-206, 254; al-Yāfi'ī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 42, 219; al-Ša'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70-71; Ibn 'Aǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 596; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 116; see also al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyā'*, p. 219. Note that the friends of God (the *awliyā'*) are likewise referred to as physicians who cure the spiritual diseases of the human soul; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 337; X, p. 180; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 411; Ibn al-Ǧawzī,

or to various ascetics whom he met during his travels treat of the mystic's love and longing for God and particularly of the ensuing pain and anguish.[89]

Enjoying intimacy with God (*uns*) is likewise a recurring theme in many statements ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn. It is presented as a most desirable goal on the mystical path, and is closely linked to the concept of Divine love. According to one saying attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn, *uns* occurs when "the lover converses/behaves openly with the Loved One (*inbisāṭ al-muḥibb ilā l-maḥbūb*)".[90] Enjoying intimacy with God (*al-uns bi-Llāh*) is often depicted as the opposite of enjoying the company of human beings (*al-uns bi-l-ḫalq*); in order to become an intimate friend of God, one must distance himself away from men, or at least worship God irrespective of what other human beings think.[91]

2.4 *Divine Knowledge* (maʿrifa)

Judging by the numerous sayings attributed to him, it appears that Ḍū l-Nūn was one of the first Sunnite mystics to have dealt with the concept of Divine knowledge (*maʿrifa*) and the figure of those who possess this knowledge

Ṣifat al-ṣafwa, II, p. 299-300; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 21; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 239.

89 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30-31; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 445; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 339, 344-345, 347, 368-369, 383, 390; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 434-440; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 222-223; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 320; Ibn Baškuwāl, *al-Ṣila*, p. 653; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 85-86, 133, 135, 179, 186, 195-197, 206, 215, 230, 238-239, 250, 261, 270-271; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 96-97. For additional sayings which treat of love and longing, see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341-343, 348-349, 353, 357, 371-372, 375, 378-379, 393-394; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 407, 414, 431; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 272; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 495; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 89.

90 See al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 125; see also al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 522; cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 129. On *uns* and love, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 339, 354-355; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, IV, p. 236; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 417. On *uns* and other terms derived from the Arabic root ʾ.N.S (*anīs*, *muʾnis*, *mustaʾnis*), see also al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 29, 33; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 336, 339-344, 362, 367, 379, 393, 395; X, p. 3; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 407; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 125; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 219; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 502.

91 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 32 (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359), 33; see also al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 97; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 342-343, 377, 395; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 413-415, 425; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126, 129-131; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 130-132, 253; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 130, 181.

(*al-ʿārifūn*, singular: *al-ʿārif*).[92] It is related that even on his deathbed, Ḏū l-Nūn desired to "attain knowledge of [God], for one brief moment before I die".[93] According to one statement ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn, the spirits (*arwāḥ*) of those who possess Divine knowledge and long to see their Lord are superior to the spirits of the common believers (*al-muʾminūn*) who yearn only for paradise. The spirits of the common believers, in turn, are superior to the spirits of those who are spiritually dormant, the *ġāfilūn* (literally: "those who are neglectful").[94]

As with many other ascetical-mystical concepts which figure in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, *maʿrifa* too is not given any clear-cut definition, but is rather explained in different ways and is referred to from different perspectives.[95] "Knowledge is attained by three [means]: by observing the way in which He has managed the affairs, the way in which He has produced His decrees and the way in which He has created the beings".[96] According to this unique statement, the mystic's knowledge pertains to cosmogonic and perhaps cosmological matters as well as to the Divine decrees. In addition, this knowledge is acquired through the mystic's own endeavor—by means of his intellectual-spiritual observation of creation (*naẓar*). Typically, however,

92 See also Massignon, *Essay*, p. 143; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 6, 43.

93 See al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 161 (*bāb aḥwālihim ʿinda l-ḥurūǧ min al-dunyā*: *wa-qīla li-Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī ʿinda mawtihi mā taštahī qāla an aʿrifahu qabla mawti bi-laḥẓa*); see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 134; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 84; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 222.

94 See al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIV, p. 2682 (towards the end of *Kitāb al-Maḥabba*: *wa-qāla Ḏū l-Nūn subḥāna man ǧaʿala l-arwāḥ ǧunūdan muǧannada fa-arwāḥ al-ʿārifīn ǧalāliyya qudsiyya fa-li-ḏālika štāqū ilā Llāh taʿālā wa-arwāḥ al-muʾminīn rūḥāniyya fa-li-ḏālika ḥannū ilā l-ǧanna wa-arwāḥ al-ġāfilīn hawāʾiyya fa-li-ḏālika mālū ilā l-dunyā*). This statement seems to reflect Ḏū l-Nūn's original teachings, for in another saying attributed to him (see above n. 83), a similar distinction is drawn between those who worship God and attain paradise, on the one hand, and those who love God and are therefore granted a beatific vision of Him, on the other.

95 For various definitions of *maʿrifa* and sayings related to the figure of the *ʿārifūn*, see al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 34; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 37 (*bāb fī tafsīr alfāẓ* […]), 151 (*bāb al-adab*), 166, 168 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 351, 353, 361-363, 373, 376; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 412; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 300; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 155-157; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126-128, 133; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 143-150, 246-248, 272; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 197-198; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 103, 106-108.

96 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 339 (*tunālu l-maʿrifa bi-ṭalāṭ bi-l-naẓar fī l-umūr kayfa dabbarahā wa-fī l-maqādīr kayfa qaddarahā wa-fī l-ḫalāʾiq kayfa ḫalaqahā*); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 143, and cf. *ibid*., p. 250-251; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 113.

the sayings attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn do not refer to the content of the mystic's knowledge (let alone to any cosmogonic or cosmological themes), but rather emphasize its Divine source. For example, in one saying it is stated that Divine knowledge is granted to the mystic when "the Truth looks down upon the secrets [of the heart] by the communion of subtle lights".[97] Alternatively, at the end of their ascensions to the upper, Divine worlds, the hearts of the mystics "return, to the chests (*ṣudūr*), steadfast in their knowledge of Thy unity".[98] The mystics who are in a state of constant unrest (*al-mahmūmūn*) have "hidden intentions (*humūm maknūna*),[99] which were created from the choice part of Divine knowledge. When the knowledge reaches their hearts, He gives them to drink from the cup of the secret of the secret, from the intimate communion with the secret of His love. They then wander about in bewilderment, longing [for Him]".[100] Divine knowledge is thus closely linked to Divine love.[101] The heart of the mystic is the spiritual organ in which the Divine knowledge

97 Or: when "God looks down upon the secrets [of the heart] by the continuing [flow] of subtle lights"; see al-Ġazālī, *Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn wa-ʿumdat al-sālikīn*, in *Maǧmūʿat rasāʾil al-Imām al-Ġazālī*, ed. Ibrāhīm Amīn Muḥammad, Cairo, al-Maktaba l-tawfīqiyya, n.d., p. 121 (*qāla Ḍū l-Nūn ḥaqīqat al-maʿrifa ṭṭilāʿ al-ḥaqq ʿalā l-asrār bi-muwāṣalat laṭāʾif al-anwār*); see also al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 352 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 275); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 127; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 145; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 504. This saying, with slight variations, is also attributed to Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Sāmarrī; see al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*).

98 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 383 ([…] *fa-raǧaʿat al-qulūb ilā l-ṣudūr ʿalā l-ṯabāt bi-maʿrifat tawḥīdika fa-lā ilāh illā anta*); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 93-94. On the hearts of God's servants being filled with knowledge during their celestial ascensions, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337, 342-343.

99 But also: "a hidden unrest", "hidden worries". The Arabic verb *hamma* has two basic meanings: to cause someone anxiety or unrest; and to focus the mental energy on something, desiring it or intending to do it. Accordingly, the noun *hamm* signifies anxiety, worry and grief, but also mental intention and the object of this intention. In its latter meaning, *hamm* is similar to *himma*, an important mystical concept which also signifies aspiration and ambition.

100 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 385 ([…] *qāla samiʿtu Ḍā l-Nūn wa-saʾalahu l-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad ʿan ṣifat al-mahmūmīn fa-qāla lahu Ḍū l-Nūn law raʾaytahum la-raʾayta qawman lahum humūm maknūna ḫuliqat min lubāb al-maʿrifa fa-iḏā waṣalat al-maʿrifa ilā qulūbihim saqāhum bi-kaʾs sirr al-sirr min muʾānasat sirr maḥabbatihi fa-hāmū bi-l-šawq ʿalā wuǧūhihim*); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 184; cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 169-170.

101 On the link between divine knowledge and love, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 348-349.

is deposited, or it is the organ by means of which this knowledge is communicated to the mystic.[102] At the same time, the heart is where the love between the mystic and God is experienced.[103]

The attainment of Divine truths (*ḥaqā'iq*)[104] and the feeling (often in the heart) of mystical certitude (*yaqīn*) are closely related to the concept of Divine knowledge and love, and likewise figure in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn.[105]

2.5 *The* awliyā'

One of the main themes which resurfaces in many of the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, or in those ascribed to the wandering ascetics-mystics whom he is said to have met, is the figure of God's friends (*awliyā'*) or pious servants (*'ibād*). They are typically portrayed as maintaining an austere, ascetic and devotional lifestyle and as being anonymous and unknown to other human beings; they passionately love God, they enjoy intimacy with Him and long to see Him in the afterlife. Although the *awliyā'* are physically present in the corporeal world, their hearts or their hearts' secrets (*asrār*), their spirits (*arwāḥ*) or their concentrated intentions (*himam, humūm*) travel in the upper, spiritual worlds (often termed *al-malakūt* or *malakūt al-samawāt*, the "Kingdom

102 See Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 414; see also al-Ša'rānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71. Note especially the expression "the hearts of those who possess divine knowledge (*qulūb al-'ārifīn*)" which recurs in many of the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn; see al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, II, p. 29; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 335-336, 339, 356, 369, 374; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 417; al-Naysābūrī, *'Uqalā' al-maǧānīn*, p. 128; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmi'*, XVII, p. 117 (al-Naǧm, 43); Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 94; Ibn 'Aǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 596. Note also the expressions *qulūb al-'ābidīn*, *qulūb awliyā'ihi* and *qulūb al-ḏākirīn* in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 336, 344; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 235, 252.

103 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 334, 336, 338, 354, 366; cf. Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 345, where the love is said to reside in the "heart's core" (*sawād al-fu'ād*; or *sawād al-qalb* in Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 227).

104 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 29; cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 94; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 41 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 36); 'Aṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 126; and see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 22; IX, p. 353 (where the term *al-muḥaqqiqīn*, "those who have attained the truth", is found), 373 (*ahl al-ḥaqā'iq*, "those who possess the truths"); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 415; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 242; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 501.

105 On *yaqīn* and its relation to knowledge and the heart, see al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 61 (*bāb al-taqwā*), 97-98 (*bāb al-yaqīn*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 332, 334, 340-343, 346, 350, 353, 362, 366, 371, 379, 392; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Ta'arruf*, p. 121; 'Aṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyā'*, I, p. 130-131, 133; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 110-111, 274; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 106, 129, 183.

of the Heavens"), reaching and even penetrating the highest veils (*ḥiǧāb*, plural: *ḥuǧub*) that separate God from creation. The *awliyāʾ* are God's loved ones (*aḥbāb, aḥibbāʾ*), His elect (*ṣafwa, aṣfiyāʾ, ḫaṣāʾiṣ, ḫāṣṣa-ḫawwāṣ, ḫīra*/*ḫiyara*), and were chosen by Him prior to the creation of the world.[106]

One typical example will suffice to demonstrate these motifs. "God has servants", Ḏū l-Nūn is quoted as saying, "who have worshiped Him in the utmost secrecy, and so He has honoured them with His utmost gratitude.[107] They are the ones whose leaves[108] pass empty with the angles, and, reaching Him, He fills them with the secret of what they [themselves] have revealed to Him in private. Their bodies are of this world, whereas their hearts are celestial, containing such knowledge as if they were worshipping Him together with the angles in those spaces and heavens".[109] Avoiding all sins, obeying God's commandments and abstaining from life's pleasures, these righteous servants maintain forbearance, contentment and utter love for God. Accordingly, they

106 For these various motifs, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 13-15; IX, p. 332, 335-336, 339-343, 346, 349-350, 354-355, 358-360, 364-372, 374, 378-386, 391; X, p. 227-228; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394-395; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 406-407, 411, 417-418, 434; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XI, p. 2092 (*Kitāb al-Tawba*); al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 71; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 20-21; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 338, 346, 349 (chapter 178); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 54, 87, 90, 93-97, 160-161, 172, 176-185, 187-188, 190, 211, 214, 253-254, 256-257, 265-266; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 341, 353, 360, 418, 431; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 22, 38-40, 42, 111, 116, 126-127, 156, 219; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 491-494, 497, 502; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 41; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 78, 80-81, 116, 124, 143-145, 160-161, 163. For the term *ḫawāṣṣ* (opposed to *ʿawāmm*, "the common believers"), see also al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 68; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10, 55 (*bāb al-tawba*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 431; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 109; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 498; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 220. For the term *walāya* ("friendship with God"), see, for example, al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 336, 378; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 410; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 127; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 252; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 79, 114.

107 That is, either His own gratitude towards them, or their own gratitude towards Him (on gratitude see above n. 81). Note that the expressions "utmost secrecy" and "utmost gratitude" (*bi-ḫāliṣ min al-sirr*, *bi-ḫāliṣ min šukrihi*) can also be rendered "sincere secrecy" and "sincere gratitude".

108 *Ṣuḥufuhum*. *Ṣuḥuf* (single: *ṣaḥīfa*) signifies, *inter alia*, the celestial books in which the good and bad actions of men are recorded; see, for example, Kor 81, 10.

109 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337 ([…] *inna li-Llāh ʿibādan ʿabadūhu bi-ḫāliṣ min al-sirr fa-šarrafahum bi-ḫāliṣ min šukrihi fa-hum allaḏīna tamurru ṣuḥufuhum maʿa l-malāʾika firġan ḫattā iḏā ṣārat ilayhi malaʾahā min sirr mā asarrū ilayhi abdānuhum dunyāwiyya wa-qulūbuhum samāwiyya qad iḫtawat qulūbuhum min al-maʿrifa ka-annahum yaʿbudūnahu maʿa l-malāʾika bayna tilka al-furaǧ wa-aṭbāq al-samawāt* […]); see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 75; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 115.

are God's "friends and loved ones", who enjoy His protection against their enemies. Moreover, they are appointed by God to cure the spiritual illnesses of mankind and are responsible for reminding men of their duties towards their Lord. The *awliyāʾ* thus function as the ultimate mediators between the Creator and His created beings, guaranteeing the spiritual wellbeing and the physical existence of the world: "they are the pegs[110] through whom the [Divine] gifts are bestowed and through whom the gates (*al-abwāb*) are opened, the clouds rise and appear, the punishment is averted and both man and land are given water".[111]

Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings on the *awliyāʾ*, as well as those of other mystics in the formative period of Islam, echo various pre-Islamic traditions.[112] However, it is also likely that Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings on this subject were inspired by his personal encounters with wandering ascetics and mystics, as described above.

2.6 *Stations and Mystical States?*

Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī is often credited in modern scholarship for having been the first one to introduce or outline the Sufi "theory" of *maqāmāt* (stations on the mystical path) and *aḥwāl* (mystical states).[113] However, a closer examination of the medieval sources reveals a slightly different picture. To begin with, the

110 *Al-awtād*, *i.e.* the pegs on which the earth rests. In Islamic mysticism, this term would come to designate one of the highest levels in the hierarchy of the *awliyāʾ*.

111 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 338 ([…] *ūlāʾika hum al-awtād allaḏīna bihim tūhabu l-mawāhib wa-bihim tuftaḥu l-abwāb wa-bihim yanšaʾu l-saḥāb wa-bihim yudfaʿu l-ʿaḏāb wa-bihim yusqā l-ʿibād wa-l-bilād*); cf. the versions in *ibid*., I, p. 12-13; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 394-395; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 411-412; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 269; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 75-76, 179-180; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 486-487; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 238-240; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 210-213. On the role of God's friends as intermediaries between God and mankind, see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 510 (chapter 560).

112 For example, the notion according to which the continuing existence of the world depends upon a fixed number of righteous men who live in every generation is already found in Rabbinical literature of the Talmudic era. See *The Babylonian Talmud*, *Yomā*, 38:b and *Ḥagīgah* 12:b; L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (transl. H. Szold), Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968, I, p. 250-253; V, p. 239, n. 164. For a general comparison in these matters between Jewish and Islamic mysticism, see P. Fenton, "The Hierarchy of the Saints in Jewish and Islamic Mysticism", *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society*, 10 (1991), p. 12-34.

113 See, for example, Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 166; Massignon, *Essay*, p. 80, 145, 153; *id.*, *The Passion of al-Ḥajjāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, transl. H. Mason, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 342; see also Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 324, 330 ("The man who above all others gave to the Ṣúfí doctrine its permanent shape was Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrí"); Melchert, "The Transition", p. 51, 57.

sources state that "Ḏū l-Nūn was the first one to discuss in his land/town the classification of states and stations of God's friends".[114] One may infer that according to this statement, Ḏū l-Nūn was not necessarily the first one in the history of Islamic mysticism to discuss the *maqāmāt* and *aḥwāl*, but rather was the first one to introduce these concepts into Egypt, where he lived and taught. Certainly, there are various sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn in which the mystical path is described in terms of an ascending series of ethical, psychological and spiritual states. For example, Ḏū l-Nūn is quoted as saying, "The rungs (*al-daraǧāt*) for which the inhabitants of the world to come (*abnāʾ al-āḫira*) have labored are seven: the first one is repentance (*tawba*),[115] then fear (*ḫawf*),[116] then asceticism (*zuhd*), then longing (*šawq*), then contentment (*riḍā*), then love (*ḥubb*) and then knowledge (*maʿrifa*) […] By means of repentance they have purified themselves from sins; by means of fear they have crossed the bridges that extend over hell (*qanāṭir al-nār*); by means of asceticism they have held the world in little account and have abandoned it; by means of longing

114 *Ḏū l-Nūn awwal man takallama bi-baldatihi fī tartīb al-aḥwāl wa-maqāmāt ahl al-walāya*. This statement is quoted from al-Sulamī's lost work *Miḥan al-Ṣūfiyya*, and appears in al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 267; *id.*, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 313 (where the expression *wa-maqāmāt al-awliyāʾ* figures instead of *wa-maqāmāt ahl al-walāya*); Ibn Taġrībirdī, *al-Nuǧūm al-zāhira*, II, p. 383 (*bi-baladihi* instead of *bi-baldatihi*); al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḫulafāʾ*, p. 277 (*bi-Miṣr* instead of *bi-baldatihi*); al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437 (*bi-Miṣr* instead of *bi-baldatihi*; *fī maqāmāt al-awliyāʾ* instead of *wa-maqāmāt ahl al-walāya*); see also the quotation of Abū l-Maḥāsin in Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 309. Cf. al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, I, p. 512 and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 400.

115 On the importance of *tawba* in the sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn, see al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 68; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10, 55 (*bāb al-tawba*), 203; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 417, 434; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 126, 384-386 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 101, 298-299); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 124, 128; al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 109; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 498; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XI, p. 2092 (*Kitāb al-Tawba*); al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, XVIII, p. 198 (al-Taḥrīm, 8); Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, XI, p. 183-184; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 263; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 219-220; see also al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 268.

116 On the importance of *ḫawf*, see al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 71 (*bāb al-ḫawf*); al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 386; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 508; Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, X, p. 146; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125-126, 131-132. On its relation to *raǧāʾ* ("hope"), see al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 33; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341, 380, 395; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 438; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XIII, p. 2343 (*Kitāb al-Ḫawf wa-l-raǧāʾ*); al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, p. 22; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 128; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 113-114; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 119-120; see also S. Sviri, "Between Fear and Hope: On the Coincidence of Opposites in Islamic Mysticism", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 9 (1987), p. 316-349.

they have merited increase (*al-mazīd*);[117] by means of contentment they have hastened the appearance of repose (*istaʿğalū l-rāḥa*); through love they have understood the [Divine] graces; and through knowledge they have attained what they have hoped for".[118]

However, in other sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn, the terms *daraǧāt*, *aḥwāl* and *maqāmāt* are used interchangeably, and seem to be synonymous.[119] Contrary to later Sufi teachings, there is no distinction in Ḏū l-Nūn's sayings between "stations", through which the mystic travels and which are the product of his own effort, and "states", which the mystic passively receives as Divine graces.[120] In addition, the mystical states which are enumerated in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn as well as their definitions and ascending sequences vary from one saying to another.[121] One may conclude that Ḏū l-Nūn did not have any

117 On this term see above n. 81.

118 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 416 (*al-daraǧāt allatī ʿamila lahā abnāʾ al-āḫira sabʿ daraǧāt awwaluhā l-tawba ṯumma l-ḫawf ṯumma l-zuhd ṯumma l-šawq ṯumma l-riḍā ṯumma l-ḥubb ṯumma l-maʿrifa ṯumma qāla bi-l-tawba taṭahharū min al-ḏunūb wa-bi-l-ḫawf ǧāzū qanāṭir al-nār wa-bi-l-zuhd taḫaffafū min al-dunyā wa-tarakūhā wa-bi-l-šawq istawǧabū l-mazīd wa-bi-l-riḍā staʿğalū l-rāḥa wa-bi-l-ḥubb ʿaqalū al-niʿam wa-bi-l-maʿrifa waṣalū ilā l-amal*).

119 See, for example, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 431; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 520; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359, 374. Compare also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, II, p. 134 (chapter 73, *suʾāl* 153) to al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 66 and Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 124. In one saying attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, the term *sabab* ("means", "means [of access]") is employed together with *ḥāl*; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 361 ([…] *laysa hunāka ḥāl yušāru ilayhi dūna ḥāl wa-lā sabab dūna sabab* […]). In yet another saying (*ibid.*, p. 378; cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 156-157), the terms *daraǧa* and *abwāb* ("gates") are likewise employed together.

120 See, for example, al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayrìyya*, p. 37 (*bāb fī tafsīr alfāẓ* […]: […] *fa-l-aḥwāl mawāhib wa-l-maqāmāt makāsib* […]); cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 247, 273; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 108.

121 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359-360 (*īmān*, *ḫawf*, *hayba*, *ṭāʿa*, *raǧāʾ*, *maḥabba*, *šawq*, *uns*, *iṭmiʾnān*; cf. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 499), 374 (*taḥayyur*, *iftiqār*, *ittiṣāl*, *ḫayra*; cf. al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 155 and ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 133), 378-379 (*ḫawf*, *raǧāʾ*, *maḥabba*, *šawq*, *fiṭna*); cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 156-157, 273; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 489-490. Note also that the highest *daraǧa* or *maqām* in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 431 and in al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 520 is said to be *šawq*, whereas in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, X, p. 242, there are said to be 19 *maqāmāt*, the highest one being that of *tawakkul*. In *ibid.*, IX, p. 374, it is stated that love is "the most overpowering mystical state for him who possesses Divine knowledge (*aǧlabu l-aḥwāl ʿalā l-ʿārif*)"; cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 246; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 106. For different definitions of various ethical, psychological, spiritual and mystical states, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 341-343, 361-363, 377-378, 392, 393-394; X, p. 180;

"systematic teaching about the mystic states (*aḥwāl*) and the stations of the mystic way (*maqāmāt*)",[122] but rather seems to have referred to the ethical, psychological and spiritual states of the mystic in various ways and from different points of view.

Moreover, many sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn stress the transient nature of the mystical states and emphasize man's utter dependence on God's will and grace in his mystical journey. Since God places the mystic in whatever state He sees fit, the mystic must focus his spiritual energy on God Himself, not on his alternating mystical states. When asked about him who possesses Divine knowledge (*al-ʿārif*), Ḏū l-Nūn is reported to have said, "he was here, but is now gone", implying that the mystical state of Divine knowledge may change from one moment to the next.[123] "I have neither a state which pleases me nor a state which displeases me; how could I myself be pleased with my state, when only the states that He wills appear in me?"[124] Accordingly, "he who possesses Divine knowledge does not cling to one single state (*ḥāla*), but rather clings to his Lord in all states".[125] True, in order to reach God and obtain Divine knowledge, one is obliged to exert one's religious and

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cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 61, 97; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 97-98 (*bāb al-yaqīn*), 103 (*bāb al-murāqaba*), 105 (*bāb al-riḍā*), 112 (*bāb al-iḫlāṣ*), 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 412-415, 417, 423-427; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 87, 253, 261; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, XVIII, p. 29 (al-Ḥašr, 9); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 511 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 102-171, 231-232; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, II, p. 300; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 21; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 495-496, 499-500; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 135-136, 154-156, 175-179, 183. These definitions are typically expressed in the formula *ṯalāṯa min aʿlām/ʿalāmāt* […], "three are the signs of [love, certainty, contentment, etc.] …".

122 See Smith, "Ḏhu'l-Nūn", *EI*[2].

123 Al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 37 (*wa-suʾila Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī ʿan al-ʿārif fa-qāla kāna hāhunā fa-ḏahaba*); and see al-Ǧunayd's interpretation of this saying in *ibid.*, p. 168 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); see also al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 156; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 148-149. On the alternating nature of the states (*iḫtilāf al-aḥwāl*) and the mystic's need for God's grace, see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 419.

124 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 382 ([…] *kataba raǧul ilā Ḏī l-Nūn yasʾaluhu ʿan ḥālihi fa-kataba ilayhi Ḏū l-Nūn mā lī ḥāl arḍāhā wa-lā lī ḥāl lā arḍāhā kayfa arḍā ḥālī li-nafsī iḏ lā yakūnu minnī illā mā arāda min al-aḥwāl* […]); cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 231; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 167.

125 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 34 (*inna al-ʿārif lā yalzamu ḥāla wāḥida innamā yalzamu rabbahu fī l-ḥālāt kullihā*); cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 351, 373, 395; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-islām*, XVIII, p. 269; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 317; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 148, 162; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71-72; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 139.

ascetical acts. Yet he is also required to relinquish all desires for any progress on the mystical path other than that which God chooses to grant him. He must remain humble and passive, close to the point of despair, and willingly accept any state which God has preordained for him.[126] Rather than resulting from his own labors, the mystic's achievements are ultimately dependent upon God's will and grace.[127]

2.7 *Remembering God* (ḏikr) *and the Hearing of Music* (samāʿ)

In various statements attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, *ḏikr* (remembering God) is presented as crucial for man's spiritual and mystical advancement. Remembering God in the true sense of the word means to focus one's attention on God alone, to such a degree that one becomes unaware of the *ḏikr* itself. God, in turn, grants the mystic complete protection (*ḥifẓ*)—perhaps even from committing sins.[128] Remembering God is performed both vocally (*bi-l-lisān*, "by tongue") and mentally (*bi-l-qalb*, "in the heart", or by means of the intellect, *al-ʿaql*).[129] Ḏū l-Nūn is quoted as saying, "every group has its punishment; the punishment of him who possesses Divine knowledge is when he ceases to remember God".[130]

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126 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 353 (*qāla wa-samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn wa-suʾila bi-mā ʿarafa l-ʿārifūna rabbahum fa-qāla in kana bi-šayʾ fa-bi-qaṭʿ al-ṭamaʿ wa-l-išrāf minhum ʿalā l-yaʾs maʿa l-tamassuk minhum bi-l-aḥwāl allatī aqāmahum ʿalayhā wa-baḏl al-maǧhūd min anfusihim ṯumma innahum waṣalū baʿdu ilā Llāh bi-Llāh*); cf. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 412; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 498.

127 See also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 373, 379; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 328-329. Note also the following statement attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn: "I came to know my Lord through my Lord; were it not for my Lord, I would not have come to know my Lord", in al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*: *qīla li-Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī bi-mā ʿarafta rabbaka qāla ʿaraftu rabbī bi-rabbī wa-lawlā rabbī lamā ʿaraftu rabbī*); cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 145; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 131-132; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 149; Ibn ʿAǧība, *Īqāẓ al-himam*, p. 380; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 169; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 342. Various prayers attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn likewise emphasize man's complete dependence upon God, in his spiritual-mystical endeavours as well as in his physical wellbeing; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 332-335, 351, 353, 357-358.

128 See al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 119 (*bāb al-ḏikr*: *man ḏakara Llāh taʿālā ḏikran ʿalā l-ḥaqīqa nasiya fī ǧanb ḏikrihi kull šayʾ wa-ḥafiẓa Llāh taʿālā ʿalayhi kull šayʾ wa-kāna lahu ʿiwaḍan ʿan kull šayʾ*), 120 ([…] *samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī wa-saʾaltuhu ʿan al-ḏikr fa-qāla ġaybat al-ḏākir ʿan al-ḏikr* […]). See also al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 396; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 410, 421, 425; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 131; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 120-121.

129 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 367, 378-379.

130 *Ibid.*, IX, p. 355 (*li-kull qawm ʿuqūba wa-ʿuqūbat al-ʿārif inqiṭāʿuhu min ḏikr Allāh*); cf. al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat*

Ḏū l-Nūn likewise seems to be one of the first Muslim mystics who commended the hearing of music for spiritual-mystical purposes (*samāʿ*). In one saying attributed to him, *samāʿ* is described in eschatological and paradisiac-sensual terms: "[*samāʿ* is] psalms of intimacy in chambers of holiness, with tunes of Divine unity in the meadows of glorification, [sung] by young, beautiful female singers; relating to meanings which lead their people to the everlasting delight [*i.e.* paradise], 'in the abode of veracity and in the presence of the powerful Sovereign' [see Kor 54, 55]".[131] However, one must be careful not to indulge one's lower self (*nafs*) when hearing music, especially when the lower self urges to display his feelings of ecstasy (*waǧd*) so that others may witness his mystical state. Only those who have attained a high spiritual level and have successfully subdued their *nafs* are fit to actively participate in a *samāʿ*.[132]

Dimašq, XVII, p. 419; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 126; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 154. For additional references to *ḏikr*, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 334, 342-344, 346, 348, 350, 353, 356, 358-359, 368, 386, 391-392; X, p. 241; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 61 (*bāb al-taqwā*), 208 (*bāb ruʾyā l-qawm*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 418, 437; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, II, p. 171-172 (al-Baqara, 152), XIV, p. 348 (al-Fāṭir, 32); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125, 128, 132; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 69, 83, 90, 92, 96, 209-210, 253, 260; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70-71; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 504; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 235; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 106, 115, 125.

131 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 354 (*suʾila Ḏū l-Nūn ʿan samāʿ al-ʿīẓa l-ḥasana wa-l-naġma l-ṭayyiba fa-qāla mazāmīr uns fī maqāṣīr quds bi-alḥān tawḥīd fī riyāḍ tamǧīd bi-muṭribāt al-ġawānī fī tilka l-maʿānī l-muʾaddiya bi-ahlihā ilā l-naʿīm al-dāʾim fī maqʿad ṣidq ʿinda malīk muqtadir* [. . .]); see also Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 498; cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 137-138; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 146-147. For additional sayings which praise music or singing, see al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 339; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 180 (*bāb al-samāʿ*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 402. On Ḏū l-Nūn's positive attitude towards *samāʿ*, see also al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, III, p. 91; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 188; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VI, p. 1122 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-samāʿ*, *bāb* I); Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 310; Massignon, *Essay*, p. 145, 205.

132 See al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, 342 (*suʾila Ḏū l-Nūn raḥimahu Llāh ʿan al-samāʿ fa-qāla wārid ḥaqq yuzʿiǧu l-qulūb ilā l-ḥaqq fa-man aṣġā ilayhi bi-ḥaqq taḥaqqaqa wa-man aṣġā ilayhi bi-nafs tazandaqa*); see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 180; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VI, p. 1160 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-samāʿ*, *bāb* II); al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 527-528 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 404); ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 129; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 137. See also the anecdote concerning Ḏū l-Nūn and the *samāʿ* in Baghdad, in al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 246, 362-363; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 182; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 396-397; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 436-437; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 193-194; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, VI, p. 1165; X, p. 1923 (*Kitāb Ḏamm al-ǧāh wa-l-riyāʾ*); Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 81-82. On *waǧd*, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 347; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 77.

2.8 *Miracles*

In an attempt to prove that Ḏū l-Nūn was a "magician" and "theurgist" who was influenced by the occult, Hermetic tradition of Egypt (see below paragraph 2.10), a number of modern scholars have drawn attention to the image of Ḏū l-Nūn as a miracle worker, an image reflected in various anecdotes found in the classical sources.[133] However, these anecdotes which ascribe to Ḏū l-Nūn miraculous deeds (*karāmāt*)—most often through the power of his prayers and invocations—are of a legendary-hagiographic character, and obviously cannot be taken at face value.[134] Although Ḏū l-Nūn seems to have believed in the miraculous powers of the *awliyāʾ*,[135] particularly in the power of their invocations,[136] and notwithstanding his own reputation as "one whose invocations are answered",[137] this does not necessarily point to any magical, occult or hermetic tendencies. The miraculous powers of the *awliyāʾ* are common place in the Sufi tradition, as is attested by the chapters devoted to this subject in

133 See the references to Nicholson and Asín Palacios below in n. 187-191. The terms "magic/magician" and "theurgy/theurgist" are used here interchangeably given that Nicholson and Asín Palacios have thus employed them both in their discussions of Ḏū l-Nūn.

134 For the miraculous deeds attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, see al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 498; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 196, 204; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 366; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 396-397; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 405-406; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 61, 98-102, 231; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 119, 121 (= Arberry's translation, p. 92, 96-97); al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 267; Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 316-317; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 490, 503; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 233-234, 236; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 66-74. In several biographical sources, Ḏū l-Nūn is referred to as "a performer of miraculous and wondrous deeds" (*ṣāḥib karāmāt wa-āyāt*); see, for example, al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 96; see also al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 124; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 114; cf. Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 35-36.

135 See al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 196; al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 285 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 226); Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 176-177; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 192; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 119 (= Arberry's translation, p. 96-97); al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 124; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 240. On *firāsa* (physiognomy) in the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn and in the anecdotes related to him, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 359, 364; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 424; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 499; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 208.

136 *Iǧābat al-daʿwa/al-duʿāʾ* ("The answering [by God] of the [*walī*'s] invocation"); see al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 395-396; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 411; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 431; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 237.

137 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 387; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 406, 410; al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 307.

medieval Sufi works.[138] Similarly, the fact that Ḍū l-Nūn is said to have possessed the knowledge of "God's greatest name" (*ism Allāh al-aʿẓam*)[139] does not imply that he was a theurgist or magician who was influenced by the Hermetic tradition.[140] The knowledge of "God's greatest name" is often attributed in Sufi literature to other mystics who by no means had anything to do with the Hermetic tradition.[141]

Moreover, Ḍū l-Nūn apparently adopted a negative attitude towards the preoccupation and obsession with miracles. When asked about "the blight by which the novice is deceived [and hindered] from God", Ḍū l-Nūn is reported to have said, "[it is when God] shows him graces/gifts as well as miraculous and wondrous deeds".[142] This negative view of miracles indeed tallies with Ḍū

138 See, for instance, *bāb karāmāt al-awliyāʾ* in al-Qušayrī's *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*; and see mainly R. Gramlich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes: Theologien und Erscheinungsformen des islamischen Heiligenwunders*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1987. In one report (see al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 405), Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sulamī relates: "I entered the presence of Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, may Allāh's mercy be upon him, and I saw in front of him a golden bowl and around it perfumed wood and ambergris was burning. He said to me: 'are you one of those who enter the presence of kings at the time of their expansion?!' He then gave me a *dirham* which I spent [all the way] to Balkh" (*waʿan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sulamī qāla daḫaltu ʿalā Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī raḥimahu Llāh fa-raʾaytu bayna yadayhi ṭaštan min ḏahab wa-ḥawlahu l-nadd wa-l-ʿanbar yusǧaru fa-qāla lī anta mimman yadḫulu ʿalā l-mulūk fī awqāt basṭihim ṯumma aʿṭānī dirhaman fa-anfaqtu minhu ilā Balḫ*; cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 81, 101; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 121). Contrary to Nicholson ("A Historical Enquiry", p. 314-315), I do not think that the use of incense necessarily points to any occult or magical procedures. Moreover, the miracle in this tradition seems to be the *dirham* given by Ḍū l-Nūn to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, which lasted the latter throughout his voyage to the east. Finally, *basṭ* mentioned in this anecdote is an important Sufi concept, denoting a joyful state of "expansion" or "dilation", the opposite of *qabḍ* ("contraction", "distress", "grief"). *Basṭ* may also mean here "bountifulness".

139 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 402; cf. al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 266; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 116 (= Arberry's translation, p. 90); al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 124. On God's name/s in the sayings attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn, see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 336; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 396; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 410; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 94; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 199-200.

140 Contrary to Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 314 and Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 166; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 44.

141 See, for example, the story concerning Ibrāhīm b. Adham in al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 9.

142 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 361 ([…] *samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn yaqūlu wa-suʾila ʿan al-āfa llatī yuḥdaʿu bihā l-murīd ʿan allāh fa-qāla yurīhi l-alṭāf wa-l-karāmāt wa-l-āyāt*); cf. al-Sulamī, *Tafsīr al-Sulamī*, ed. Sayyid ʿAmrān, Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2001, II,

l-Nūn's psychological teachings which highlight the danger in indulging the lower self on the mystical path: by performing miracles, the mystic magnifies his *nafs* and enhances its arrogance, ultimately distancing himself away from God. In addition, as we have seen above, Ḏū l-Nūn emphasized the mystic's utter dependence on God; true miracles are not the product of man's own actions and powers, but rather result from Divine graces.[143]

2.9 *The Koran and the Prophetic* sunna

The sayings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn reveal a strict, orthodox approach, in the sense that the loyalty to the Koran and the religious law of Islam (the *šarīʿa*) is placed above all other duties incumbent upon the mystic. Moreover, adherence to the Koran and the *šarīʿa* is a prerequisite for any progress on the mystical path.

According to the sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, one must comply with both the Koran and the Prophetic *sunna*,[144] combining religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) with religious deeds (*ʿamal*, *farāʾiḍ*).[145] When asked about the meaning of Divine love (*maḥabba*), Ḏū l-Nūn is reported to have said: "you should love what God loves and hate what He hates; do all that is good and relinquish

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p. 13; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ǧāmiʿ*, VII, p. 329 (*al-Aʿrāf*, 182); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 427; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 318; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 153.

143 See also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 364-365; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 406; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 424; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 113; and cf. al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 169, 197. This negative attitude towards miracles is perhaps also reflected in the story of Yūsuf b. al-Ḥusayn, the famous disciple of Ḏū l-Nūn who desired to learn from his master "Allāh's greatest name". However, having failed a simple test, Ḏū l-Nūn refused to reveal this secret knowledge to him. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 386-387; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 78-79; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 221; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 488. See also the story related by Ibn al-ʿArabī (*al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 251), in which Abū l-ʿAbbās al-ʿAbbāsī desires to learn from Ḏū l-Nūn *ism Allāh al-aʿẓam*. Annoyed with Abū l-ʿAbbās's request, Ḏū l-Nūn replies: "if your heart becomes bashful, invoke what ever you want—and that is the name of Allāh" ([...] *fa-aqbala ʿalayya wa-qāla lī yā hāḏā iḏā raqqa qalbuka fa-dʿu bi-mā šiʾta fa-ḏāka ism Allāh*); cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 67.

144 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 353; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 428; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 520 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 168; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10. On the importance of the Koran, see also al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 156.

145 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 361, 372-373, 378; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 429-430; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 518, 521 (chapter 560); Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 500; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71; Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-awliyāʾ*, p. 220; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 129; cf. al-Huǧwīrī, *Kašf al-maḥǧūb*, p. 368 (= Nicholson's translation, p. 286).

whatever diverts [you] from God; do not fear any reprehension that is directed against you due to [your worshipping of] God; be compassionate towards the believers and rough towards the nonbelievers; and follow God's Messenger, may God's prayers and blessings be upon him, in religion".[146] Hence, mystical love cannot be attained without fully complying with the Prophet's *sunna*: "Following God's loved one [*ḥabīb Allāh*, *i.e.* Muḥammad] in his moral character [or ethics, *fī aḫlāqihi*], in his actions, commandment and manner of conduct (*wa-sunanihi*) is one of the signs of love for God".[147] Similarly, in one statement ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn, enjoying intimacy with God (*uns*) is said to amount to "religious knowledge (*ʿilm*) and [the knowledge or recitation of] the Koran".[148] Finally, Divine and religious knowledge (*maʿrifa, ʿilm*)—the ultimate goal of the mystical path—cannot be attained without strictly obeying the commandments of the *šarīʿa*.[149]

Waraʿ—pious abstinence from food or any other object that is suspected (*šubha*, plural: *šubuhāt*) as being unlawful—is held in high esteem by Ḍū l-Nūn.[150] *Waraʿ* forms the basis of *zuhd* (asceticism), and is essential for true

146 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 29 ([...] *samiʿtu Ḍā l-Nūn wa-suʾila ʿan al-maḥabba qāla an tuḥibba mā aḥabba Llāh wa-tubġiḍa mā abġaḍa Llāh wa-tafʿala l-ḫayr kullahu wa-tarfuḍa kull mā yašġalu ʿan Allāh wa-allā taḫāfa fī Llāh lawmat lāʾim maʿa l-ʿatf li-l-muʾminīna wa-l-ġilẓa ʿalā l-kāfirīna wa-ttibāʿ rasūl Allāh ṣallā Llāh ʿalayhi wa-sallama fī l-dīn*); see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 392, 394; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 136.

147 Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 30 ([...] *samiʿtu Ḍā l-Nūn yaqūlu min ʿalāmāt al-maḥabba li-Llāh mutābaʿat ḥabīb Allāh fī aḫlāqihi wa-afʿālihi wa-amrihi wa-sunanihi*); see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 10; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 427; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 134. On the importance of following the prophetic *sunna*, of obeying God's commandments (*ṭāʿa*) and avoiding acts of legal disobedience (*maʿṣiya*, plural: *maʿāṣī*; or *muḫālafa*, plural: *muḫālafāt*), see also al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 33; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 58 (*bāb al-muǧāhada*), 99 (*bāb al-ṣabr*); see also al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 338, 340-341, 343, 349-350, 372-373, 377, 380, 387, 392-394; al-Bustī, *al-ʿUzla*, p. 22; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 408, 412, 414-415; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 125, 128-129; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 512-513 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 168-169; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 338, 431; al-Yāfiʿī, *Rawḍ al-rayāḥīn*, p. 40; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 235; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 125.

148 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 377 (*qīla li-Ḍī l-Nūn mā l-uns bi-Llāh qāla l-ʿilm wa-l-Qurʾān*). On *uns*, love and avoiding sins, see also *ibid.*, p. 386.

149 See al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 61; see also al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 61 (*bāb al-taqwā*), 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); al-Kalābāḏī, *al-Taʿarruf*, p. 73; al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 550; Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 234; and cf. al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 145.

150 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 337-338, 361, 373, 380; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 414, 417, 419; al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, IV, p. 82, 223; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, IV,

repentance or spiritual awakening (*tawba*).[151] Even a mystic who has attained the "light of Divine knowledge" must continue observing *wara*ʿ.[152]

In various sayings attributed to him, Ḏū l-Nūn severely criticizes the *ʿulamāʾ* and *ḥadīṯ* scholars who, rather than maintaining humbleness and modesty, boast of their religious knowledge and make it public. Seeking fame and a high social status, and using their religious knowledge as a means for gaining worldly benefits, these *ʿulamāʾ* are always keen on cooperating with the political authorities.[153] This criticism was no doubt inspired by Ḏū l-Nūn's own negative experience with the religious and political establishment of his time. Notwithstanding this condemnation of the *ʿulamāʾ*, and despite the fact that he did not consider himself to be a *muḥaddiṯ*,[154] Ḏū l-Nūn appears to have been knowledgeable (at least to a certain degree) in *ḥadīṯ* and in religious law,[155] and is known for transmitting various prophetic traditions.[156] The authenticity

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p. 679 (*Kitāb Ādāb al-akl*, *bāb* IV); Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 316; ʿAṭṭār, *Taḏkirat al-awliyāʾ*, I, p. 121 (= Arberry's translation, p. 92), 124; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 77, 108; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71.

151 See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 421; al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, XI, p. 2092 (*Kitāb al-Tawba*).

152 Al-Sarrāǧ, *al-Lumaʿ*, p. 61; al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya*, p. 167 (*bāb al-maʿrifa*); al-Suhrawardī, *ʿAwārif*, p. 550; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 150.

153 See, for example, al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 34; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, X, p. 241; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 422, 425-427, 429; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 68, 158-159; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 70-71.

154 See al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, p. 71; see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 432; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 513 (chapter 560); Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Muḫtār*, I, p. 490-491.

155 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 363, 369, 387, 394; cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Amr bi-l-ittibāʿ wa-l-nahy ʿan al-ibtidāʿ*, ed. Mašhūr Ḥasan Salmān, Riyadh, Dār Ibn al-Qayyim, 1990, p. 84-85; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 173, 263.

156 See al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 28; al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, X, p. 3-4; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 398; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 265-266; Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 67-72, 81, 230, 260-261; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 235-241. He may have picked up some of these *ḥadīṯ*s in his travels through Syria, perhaps during his visit to Damascus; see Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 99 n. 1; see also Sezgin, GAS, I, p. 643-644. Although Ḏū l-Nūn transmitted *ḥadīṯ*s which go back to Mālik b. Anas, and may have even adhered to the Mālikī school of law (see Böwering, *The Mystical Vision*, p. 66), the claim that Ḏū l-Nūn was one of the transmitters of Mālik's *Muwaṭṭaʾ* (see, for example, Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 315) is an exaggeration. It is likewise doubtful whether Ḏū l-Nūn actually studied with Mālik himself, as certain scholars state (see Ǧāmī, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 35; Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 311; Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 167).

of these traditions and Ḍū l-Nūn's reliability as a transmitter of *ḥadīṯ* are a matter of dispute among the *ḥadīṯ* scholars.[157]

2.10 *Ḍū l-Nūn the Occultist*

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this article, various scholars, medieval and modern ones alike, have claimed that Ḍū l-Nūn was a magician and alchemist who was influenced by the occult pre-Islamic tradition of Egypt. The earliest concrete evidence of the attempt to link Ḍū l-Nūn to this tradition appears in *Murūǧ al-ḏahab* by al-Masʿūdī (died in 345/956). In referring to the ancient pagan temples of Egypt termed *barābī* (singular: *barbā*), al-Masʿūdī writes that several informants from Iḫmīm had told him that Ḍū l-Nūn was among those who "used to interpret the accounts related to these *barābī*. He visited them and examined many of the writings and images that were painted within them and drawn on them".[158] Ḍū l-Nūn is even said to have discovered a book in the *barbā* [of Iḫmīm]; al-Masʿūdī quotes two sayings and one poem which Ḍū l-Nūn allegedly derived from this book. These three quotations, however, have neither any mystical meaning nor any alchemical or magical content.[159]

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157 See al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, I, p. 97; al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 393; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, XVII, p. 404; al-Ḏahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, VIII, p. 313; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437-438.

158 ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb Murūǧ al-ḏahab wa-maʿādin al-ǧawhar*, eds C.B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, revised edition by Ch. Pellat, Beirut, Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1966, II, p. 88 (*qāla l-Masʿūdī wa-aḫbaranī ġayr wāḥid bi-bilād Iḫmīm min Ṣaʿīd Miṣr ʿan Abī l-Fayḍ Ḏī l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī l-Iḫmīmī l-zāhid wa-kāna ḥakīman wa-kānat lahu ṭarīqa yaʾtīhā wa-niḫla yaqṣiduhā wa-kāna mimman yufassiru aḫbār hāḏihi l-barābī wa-zārahā wa-mtaḥana kaṯīran mimmā ṣuwwira fihā wa-rusima ʿalayha min al-kitāba wa-l-ṣuwar*). On the term *barābī* and its Coptic origin, see G. Wiet, "Barbā", *EI*[2]. For descriptions of the *barbā* in Iḫmīm, its magnificent structure, its wondrous images and its miraculous-magical powers, see Ibn Ǧubayr, *Riḥlat Ibn Ǧubayr*, p. 35-38; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, I, p. 362 (s.v. "al-Barābī"); al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, I, p. 364-365; Aḥmad b. ʿAlī l-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār bi-ḏikr al-ḫiṭaṭ wa-l-āṯār*, Cairo, Būlāq, 1270/[1853-1854], I, p. 239-240. Note that Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī writes that the *barbā* in Iḫmīm still existed in his days. He adds that the majority of works on Egyptian history contain stories of such temples, notwithstanding their fictitious character (*qultu wa-buyūt hāḏihi l-barābī fī ʿiddat mawāḍiʿ min Ṣaʿīd Miṣr fī Iḫmīm wa-Anṣinā wa-ġayrihimā bāqiya ilā l-ān wa-l-ṣuwar al-ṯābita fī l-ḥiǧāra mawǧūda wa-hāḏihi l-qiṣṣa l-maḏkūra qalla an yaḫluwa minhā kitāb fī aḫbār Miṣr fa-li-ḏālika ḏukirat wa-in kānat bi-l-ḫurāfa ašbah*); cf. Zakariyāʾ b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, *Āṯār al-bilād wa-aḫbār al-ʿibād*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, n.d., p. 139-140 (s.v. "Iḫmīm").

159 See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūǧ al-ḏahab*, II, p. 88-89: "[Ḍū l-Nūn] said: In one of the *barābī*, I saw a book which I examined. It read: 'Beware of slaves who are set free; of young men who

The two sayings mentioned here are likewise attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn by al-Iṣfahānī in his *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, albeit as two separate statements.[160] Their attribution to Ḏū l-Nūn seems to be spurious: in other sources, these two sayings and the aforementioned poem are ascribed to figures other than Ḏū l-Nūn.[161] In addition, the discovery of occult knowledge, either by deciphe-

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are deceived/heedless; of an enslaved army; and of Copts [according to another version: Nabataeans] who assimilate themselves to the Arabs'. He [further] said: In one of the *barābī*, I saw a book which I examined. It stated: 'That which is predetermined is predetermined and the [Divine] decree laughs'. He [also] claimed that he saw at the end of [this book] something written in the same handwriting. He studied it. It said: 'You forecast by the stars, yet do not know / while the Lord of the star does what He wills' " (*qāla raʾaytu fī baʿḍ al-barābī kitāb tadabbartuhu fa-iḏā huwa ḥḍarū l-ʿabīd al-muʿtaqīna wa-l-aḥdāṯ al-muġtarrīna wa-l-ǧund al-mutaʿabbadīna wa-l-qibṭ* [according to another version: *wa-l-nabaṭ*] *al-mustaʿribīna wa-qāla raʾaytu fī baʿḍ al-barābī kitāb tadabbartuhu fa-iḏā fīhi yuqaddaru l-maqdūr wa-l-qaḍāʾ yaḍḥaku wa-zaʿama annahu raʾā fī āḫir kitāba bi-ḏālika l-qalam al-awwal fa-tabayyanahā fa-waǧadahā tudabbiru bi-l-nuǧūm wa-lasta tadrī wa-rabb al-naǧm yafʿalu mā yurīdu*; cf. the French translation of de Meynard and de Courteille). Concerning the expression "Nabataeans who assimilate themselves to the Arabs", see T. Fahd, "Nabaṭ", *EI*², VII, p. 836. Al-Masʿūdī's report is quoted with slight variations in ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Bakrī, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, Beirut, Dār al-ġarb al-islāmī, 1992, I, p. 519; and cf. the versions in Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 524 (chapter 560) and *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 171.

160 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 339 ([…] *samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī yaqūlu qaraʾtu fī bāb Miṣr bi-l-suryāniyya fa-tadabbartuhu fa-iḏā fīhi yuqaddiru l-muqaddirūna wa-l-qaḍāʾ yaḍḥaku*), 367 ([…]*samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn yaqūlu naʿūḏu bi-Llāh min al-nabaṭī iḏā staʿraba*; […] *samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn yaqūlu raʾaytu fī barrīyya* [read: *barbā*] *mawḍiʿan* [*yuqālu*] *lahu Dandara fa-iḏā kitāb fīhi maktūb iḥḍarū l-ʿabīd al-muʿtaqīna wa-l-aḥdāṯ al-mutaqarribīna wa-l-ǧund al-mutaʿabbadīna wa-l-nabaṭ al-mustaʿribīna*. On Dandara in the Ṣaʿīd, where a number of *barābī* were located, see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-buldān*, II, p. 477-478, s.v. "Dandara"). Note that concerning the first saying quoted by al-Aṣfahānī, Ḏū l-Nūn is said to have read it in the Syriac language; cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 150 ([…] *samiʿtu Ḏā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī yaqūlu qaraʾtu fī bāb barābī Miṣr bi-suryāniyya fa-tadabbartuhu fa-iḏā fīhi yuqaddaru l-maqdūr wa-l-qaḍāʾ yaḍḥaku*). Note also that in al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilya*, all three parts of the tradition discussed here are transmitted by the same ʿAbd al-Ḥakam b. Aḥmad b. Salām al-Ṣadafī, whose *nisba* points to an Egyptian origin; see Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Lubāb*, II, p. 236; and see also Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futūḥāt*, IV, p. 524 (chapter 560); *id.*, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 150 ("Sālim" instead of "Salām"), 171 ("al-Ṣūfī" instead of "al-Ṣadafī"). Similarly, Ibn Yūnus al-Ṣadafī is said to have transmitted a report in his lost work on Egyptian scholars which mentions Ḏū l-Nūn's ability to read ancient handwriting; see below n. 164.

161 See Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Šarḥ nahǧ al-balāġa*, XVIII, p. 127 (*qāla l-Ḥasan ʿalayhi l-salām law raʾayta l-aǧal wa-masīrahu la-nasīta l-amal wa-ġurūrahu wa-yuqaddiru l-muqaddirūna wa-l-qaḍāʾ yaḍḥaku*); Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūs al-Ǧahšiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb*, eds Muṣṭafā l-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and ʿAbd al-Ḥafīẓ Šilbī, Cairo, Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā l-Bābī

ring images on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples or by unearthing books that are buried within them, is a well-known *topos* in Arabic alchemical and Hermetic literature.[162] Apparently, al-Masʿūdī picked up the tradition discussed here during a visit of his to Upper Egypt.[163] In fact, this tradition seems to have originated among Egyptian circles which were active in the first half of the 4th/10th century.[164]

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l-Ḥalabī wa-awlādihi, 1938, p. 217 (concerning Ǧaʿfar b. Yaḥyā l-Barmakī: [...] *fa-lammā sāra ilā sūq Yaḥyā raʾā raǧul qāʾim wa-huwa yaqūlu tadabbara bi-l-nuǧūm wa-laysa yadrī wa-rabb al-naǧm yafʿalu mā yurīdu* [...]; cf. Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, I, p. 339-340, 344-345); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīḫ madīnat Dimašq*, LIV, p. 294 (concerning the Shiite Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir: [...] *annahu kāna yataʿawwaḍu min al-nabaṭī iḏā staʿraba wa-min al-ʿarabī iḏā stanbaṭa* [...]); ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba, *Kitāb ʿUyūn al-aḫbār*, Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya, 1925-1930, I, p. 269 ([...] *kāna Salmān yataʿawwaḍu bi-Llāh min al-šayṭān wa-l-sulṭān wa-l-ʿilǧ iḏā staʿraba* [...]); al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, XIII, p. 430 ([...] *ḏakarū Abā Ḥanīfa fī maǧlis Sufyān fa-qāla kāna yuqālu ʿūḏū bi-Llāh min šarr al-nabaṭī iḏā staʿraba*).

162 See Muḥammad b. Umayl al-Tamīmī, *Kitāb al-Māʾ al-waraqī wa-l-arḍ al-naǧmiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Turāb ʿAlī, in H.E. Stapleton and M.H. Ḥusain, "Three Arabic treatises on Alchemy by Muḥammad bin Umail (10th Century A.D.)", *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (*Calcutta*), 12 (1933), p. 1-3, reprinted in F. Sezgin *et al.* (eds), *Ibn Umayl: Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad* (*fl. c. 300/912*). *Texts and Studies* (= *Natural Sciences in Islam, vol. 75*), Frankfurt, Goethe University, 2002, p. 7-9; G. Strohmaier, "Ibn Umayl", *EI*²; P. Starr, "Towards a Context for Ibn Umayl, Known to Chaucer as the Alchemist 'Senior' ", *Journal of Arts and Sciences* (The Çankaya University, Ankara), 11 (2009), p. 66, p. 69 and n. 14, p. 73; P. Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān: contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam. Volume II: Jābir et la science grecque*, Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1942, p. 272, p. 274 n. 2, p. 288, p. 303; M. Plessner, "Hermes Trismegistus and Arab Science", *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954), p. 51; N.P. Joosse, "An Example of Medieval Arabic Pseudo-Hermetism: the Tale of Salāmān and Absāl", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 38/2 (1993), p. 282-283; K. Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: from Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 238.

163 On his visit there see Ch. Pellat, "al-Masʿūdī", *EI*², VI, p. 785. According to Pellat, al-Masʿūdī, who had travelled quite a lot, spent the last years of his life in al-Fusṭāṭ.

164 See above in n. 160 concerning ʿAbd al-Ḥakam b. Aḥmad b. Salām al-Ṣadafī, and see the discussion below on Ibn Umayl and Abū Ḥarrī l-Iḫmīmī; see also al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, II, p. 437: "Ibn Yūnus said: [Ḏū l-Nūn's] *kunya* is Abū l-Fayḍ and he [came] from a town called Iḫmīm. He used to read the ancient handwriting. I have met several disciples of his who used to tell us about his wondrous deeds [...]" (*wa-qāla Ibn Yūnus yuknā Abā l-Fayḍ min qarya yuqālu lahā Iḫmīm wa-kāna yaqraʾu l-ḫaṭṭ al-muqaddam laqītu ġayr wāḥid min aṣḥābihi kānū yaḥkūna lanā ʿanhu ʿaǧāʾib*). On Ibn Yūnus al-Ṣadafī, Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad (281/894-347/958), and his (now lost) historical work on Egyptian scholars, see F. Rosenthal, "Ibn Yūnus", *EI*².

The link between Ḏū l-Nūn and the world of alchemy appears in the writings of Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Umayl al-Tamīmī, who presumably lived during the first half of the 4th/10th century, and seems to have been active mainly in Egypt. In his work *al-Māʾ al-waraqī* (*The Book of the Silvery Water*), Ibn Umayl refers to Ḏū l-Nūn as an authority on alchemical matters together with other figures such as Hermes, Plato and Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān.[165]

Ibn al-Nadīm (died in 385/995 or in 388/998) likewise considers Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī to have been an alchemist. In his well-known *al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm lists Ḏū l-Nūn among "the philosophers who discussed the art" (= alchemy; *al-falāsifa llaḏīna takallamū fī l-ṣanʿa*), together with the names of Hermes, Plato, Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān and others.[166] Ibn al-Nadīm further states that Ḏū l-Nūn, who adhered to the Sufi path, compiled various works on alchemy. He enumerates two of these works: *Kitāb al-Rukn al-akbar* (*The Book of the Greatest Element*)[167] and *Kitāb al-Ṯiqa fī l-ṣanʿa* (*The Book of Confidence / the Reliable one Concerning the Art*).[168] Ibn al-Nadīm also mentions the name of a certain Abū Ḥarrī ʿUṯmān b. Suwayd al-Iḫmīmī, from Iḫmīm, who wrote a book entitled *Kitāb Ṣarf al-tawahhum ʿan Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī* (*The Book which Dismisses Fanciful Presumptions Regarding Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī*). According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Abū Ḥarrī l-Iḫmīmī was an alchemist who wrote several books on alchemy; he thus must have composed his work on Ḏū l-Nūn sometime between 245/859-860, the year in which Ḏū l-Nūn died, and 377/987-988, the year in which Ibn al-Nadīm completed his *Fihrist*.[169] Plessner has suggested

165 See Ibn Umayl al-Tamīmī, *Kitāb al-Māʾ al-waraqī*, p. 58 (= Sezgin *et al.* (eds), *Ibn Umayl*, p. 66); see also M. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 1972, p. 196; Strohmaier, "Ibn Umayl", *EI*[2]. On Ibn Umayl himself see also Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 217-220; Sezgin, *GAS*, IV, p. 283-288; Sezgin *et al.* (eds), *Ibn Umayl*; Starr, "Towards a Context for Ibn Umayl", p. 61-77 and the references given there. On the figure of Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān and the Shiite-Ismāʿīlī alchemical corpus attributed to him, see Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān: contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam. Volume I: Le corpus des écrits jābiriens*, Cairo, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1943; *id.*, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, II; P. Kraus [M. Plessner], "Djābir b. Ḥayyān", *EI*[2]; P. Lory, *Alchimie et mystique en terre d'Islam*, Gallimard, 1989, especially p. 47-125.

166 See Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, Leipzig, F.C.W. Vogel, 1871, p. 353.

167 Cf. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 196: "Das grosse Buch des Elementes".

168 Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 358 (*Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī wa-huwa Abū l-Fayḍ Ḏū l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm wa-kāna mutaṣawwif wa-lahu aṯar fī l-ṣanʿa wa-kutub muṣannafa fa-min kutubihi kitāb al-rukn al-akbar kitāb al-ṯiqa fī l-ṣanʿa*).

169 See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 359 ([…] *ʿUṯmān b. Suwayd Abū Ḥarā* [*sic*] *l-Iḫmīmī min Iḫmīm qarya min qurā Miṣr wa-kāna muqaddaman fī ṣināʿat al-kīmiyāʾ wa-raʾsan fīhā*

that Uṭmān b. Suwayd was perhaps the author of the original Arabic source which formed the basis for the famous Latin work on alchemy entitled *Turba Philosophorum* (*Assembly of the Philosophers*).[170] Be that as it may, the two works which Ibn al-Nadīm attributes to Ḏū l-Nūn, as well as the work by Abū Ḥarrī l-Iḫmīmī which he mentions, have not come down to us.

In his *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī (420/1029-462/1070) writes that Ḏū l-Nūn belonged to the "class (*ṭabaqa*) of Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān, as he dealt with the art of alchemy, undertook the [studying of] the science of the hidden realm (*ʿilm al-bāṭin*) and gained knowledge of many philosophical sciences". It is significant that Ṣāʿid also links al-Ḥāriṭ al-Muḥāsibī and Sahl al-Tustarī to Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān. According to Ṣāʿid, Ǧābir's preoccupation with alchemy, philosophy and the "science of the hidden realm" is the "way of those Muslims who adhere to the Sufi path, such as al-Ḥāriṭ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī and their likes". Clearly, however, both al-Muḥāsibī and al-Tustarī had nothing to do with alchemy and the occult.[171] Ṣāʿid's report is quoted by the Egyptian scholar Ibn al-Qifṭī (568/1172-646/1248) in his *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, albeit with an important addition: "He [Ḏū l-Nūn] used to keep to the *barbā* in the town of Iḫmīm. This is a temple of ancient wisdom (*bayt min buyūt al-ḥikma l-qadīma*), in which are found wonderful images and strange patterns that increase the faith of the believer and the exorbitant disobedience of the nonbeliever. It is said that the knowledge contained in these [images and patterns] had been revealed to [Ḏū l-Nūn] through [his] friendship with

[...]). See also Ismāʿīl Bāšā l-Baġdādī l-Bābānī, *Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn asmāʾ al-muʾallifīn wa-āṯār al-muṣannifīn*, Beirut, Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāṯ al-ʿarabī (a reprint of the 1951 Istanbul edition), I, p. 652, where it is stated that Abū Ḥarrī ʿUṭmān b. Suwaydā [*sic*] died around the year 298[/910-911]; and see Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, I, p. lxiii, who suggests that ʿUṭmān b. Suwayd lived in the second half of the 3rd/9th century. For the date in which Ibn al-Nadīm completed his *Fihrist*, see J.W. Fück, "Ibn al-Nadīm", *EI*², III, p. 895. On the name Ḥarrī, see Ibn Mākūlā, *al-Ikmāl*, II, p. 83.

170 See M. Plessner, "The Place of the Turba Philosophorum in the Development of Alchemy", *Isis* 45/4 (1954), p. 333-334; see also P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic. Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 58-59, 389-390.

171 See Ṣāʿid b. Aḥmad al-Andalusī, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, ed. L. Cheikho, Beirut, al-Maṭbaʿa l-kāṯūlīkiyya li-l-ābāʾ al-yasūʿiyyīn, 1912, p. 61: *wa-minhum Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān al-ṣūfī wa-kāna mutaqaddim fī l-ʿulūm al-ṭabīʿiyya bāriʿ minhā fī ṣināʿat al-kīmiyāʾ* [...] *wa-kāna maʿa hāḏā mušrif ʿalā kaṯīr min ʿulūm al-falsafa wa-mutaqallid li-l-ʿilm al-maʿrūf bi-ʿilm al-bāṭin wa-huwa maḏhab al-mutaṣawwifīn min ahl al-islām ka-l-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī wa-Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī wa-nuẓarāʾihim*; *wa-minhum Ḏū l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm al-Iḫmīmī* [*sic*] *min ṭabaqat Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān fī ntiḥāl ṣināʿat al-kimiyā* [*sic*] *wa-taqallud ʿilm al-bāṭin wa-l-išrāf ʿalā kaṯīr min ʿulūm al-falsafa*. On Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, see G. Martinez-Gros, "Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī", *EI*².

God (*bi-ṭarīq al-walāya*), and that he performed miraculous deeds (*karāmāt*)".[172] Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī (died around 487/1094), who, like Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, was a 5th/11th century Andalusī scholar, adds a further element to the theme of Ḏū l-Nūn and the *barbā* of Iḫmīm. According to al-Bakrī, Ḏū l-Nūn had gained his knowledge in the field of alchemy and his magical-miraculous abilities during the time he spent as a youngster in the service of a certain priest (*rāhib*) who officiated at the temple of Iḫmīm. This priest taught Ḏū l-Nūn "the handwriting [which covered the walls of the *barbā*] and showed him the sacrifice, the incense and the name of the spiritual power [presiding over the temple, *al-rūḥānī*], ordering him to conceal this". Accordingly, Ḏū l-Nūn sealed the writing on the temple with the "clay of wisdom" (*ṭīn al-ḥikma*), a special type of clay which can only be removed with the stone that it covers, thus corrupting the hidden writing.[173]

The tradition according to which Ḏū l-Nūn had acquired his alchemical and magical knowledge from the *barbā* of Iḫmīm resurfaces in a number of historiographical, geographical and *adab* works which date from the 8th/14th century onwards and which are of a North African and Egyptian provenance.

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172 ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. al-Qifṭī, *Taʾrīḫ al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. J. Lippert, Leipzig, Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903, p. 185: *Ḏū l-Nūn b. Ibrāhīm al-Iḫmīmī l-Miṣrī min ṭabaqat Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān fī ntiḥāl ṣināʿat al-kīmiyāʾ wa-taqallud ʿilm al-bāṭin wa-l-išrāf ʿalā kaṯīr min ʿulūm al-falsafa wa-kāna kaṯīr al-mulāzama li-barbā baldat Iḫmīm fa-innahā bayt min buyūt al-ḥikma l-qadīma wa-fīhā l-taṣāwīr al-ʿaǧība wa-l-miṯālāt al-ġarība llatī tazīdu l-muʾmin īmānan wa-l-kāfir ṭuġyānan wa-yuqālu innahu futiḥa ʿalayhi ʿilm mā fīhā bi-ṭarīq al-walāya wa-kānat lahu karāmāt*; see also *ibid.*, p. 160-161. On Ibn al-Qifṭī, see A. Dietrich, "Ibn al-Qifṭī", *EI*[2].

173 See al-Bakrī, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, II, p. 545 (*wa-yuqālu inna Ḏā l-Nūn al-Iḫmīmī innamā qadara ʿalā mā qadara min ʿulūm al-barbā ḥattā ʿamila l-ṣanʿa wa-l-ǧawhar wa-ḥumila ilā l-ʿIrāq fī layla wa-ġayr ḏālika min al-ʿilm li-annahu ḥadama rāhiban kāna bi-Iḫmīm yuqālu lahu Sās muddat ṣibāhu fa-ʿallamahu l-ḥaṭṭ wa-dallahu ʿalā l-qurbān wa-l-baḫūr wa-ism al-rūḥānī wa-awṣāhu bi-an yaktuma ḏālika fa-lammā ʿalima Ḏū l-Nūn mā ʿalima ṭayyana mabnā al-ḥukamāʾ bi-ṭīn al-ḥikma llaḏī lā yanqaliʿu illā maʿa l-ḥaǧar wa-yufsidu/yafsudu bi-qalʿihi l-ḥaṭṭ al-marmūz bihi*). This tradition is quoted with slight variations in Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Ḥimyarī's *al-Rawḍ al-miʿṭār fī ḫabar al-aqṭār*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Beirut, Maktabat Lubnān, 1984, p. 17. On al-Bakrī, see É. Lévi-Provençal, "Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī", *EI*[2]. Note that al-Ḥimyarī, who lived in the 9th/15th century, came from the Maghrib, though *al-Rawḍ al-miʿṭār* is possibly based on an earlier, 7th/13th century redaction, which was probably also written by a member of the Ibn ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Ḥimyarī family; see T. Lewicki, "Ibn ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Ḥimyarī", *EI*[2], III, p. 675-676.

None of these works belong to the Sufi tradition.[174] In these later sources, Ḍū l-Nūn is portrayed as reading the ancient writing on the walls of the *barbā* in Iḫmīm.[175]

In addition to the two works mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, there are other treatises on alchemy and magic which are attributed to Ḍū l-Nūn and which have come down to us in manuscript form.[176] Poems ascribed to Ḍū l-Nūn appear in the works of various medieval authors who wrote on alchemy and/or magic such as Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ḥalabī (lived after the 6th/12th century),[177] Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sīmāwī l-ʿIrāqī (7th/13th century),[178] Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. ʿAlī l-Būnī (died presumably in 622/1225),[179] Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Yaḥyā l-Marrākušī,[180] Aydamīr b. ʿAlī l-Ǧildakī (died around 743/1342)[181] and Ismāʿīl al-Tinnīsī (lived after the 6th/12th century).[182] It is noteworthy that most of these authors lived or were mainly active in North Africa and Egypt.[183] Although the Sufi sources abound with poems attributed

174 See the reference to al-Ḥimyarī's work in the previous note; see also al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, I, p. 365 (*wa-yuqālu inna Ḍā l-Nūn al-Miṣrī al-ʿābid fakka minhā ʿilm al-kīmiyā'*); al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ*, I, p. 240 (*wa-yuqālu inna Ḍā l-Nūn ʿarafa minhā ʿilm al-kīmiyā'*).

175 See, for example, Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, p. 11: "Among the [wonders of Egypt] is the *barbā* of Iḫmīm. It is a marvel, due to the images and other things which are found within it. Ḍū l-Nūn used to read the Greek writing that was on it and [extract] the excellent wisdom which [this writing] contained" (*wa-min ḏālika barbā Iḫmīm wa-hiya ʿaǧab min al-ʿaǧā'ib li-mā fīhā min al-ṣuwar wa-ġayrihā wa-kāna Ḍū l-Nūn yaqraʾu mā ʿalayhā min al-ḫaṭṭ al-yūnānī wa-mā fīhi min al-ḥikma l-bāliġa*).

176 For these manuscripts and their contents, see Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Weimar, Emil Felber, 1898, I, p. 198-199; *id.*, GAL (*Supplement*), I, p. 214; Sezgin, GAS, I, p. 643-644. See also the work entitled *Risālat al-šayḫ* [...] *Abī Ḥusayn Ḥasan* [...] *fī l-ḥikma l-ʿuẓmā wa-l-ṣanʿa l-mubāraka*, MS Garrett no. 47B, Princeton University. According to the Princeton catalogue, Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī is mentioned on fol. 2a of this manuscript which treats of alchemy.

177 On him see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 232-233.

178 *Ibid.*, p. 235-237, 391-392.

179 See A. Dietrich, "al-Būnī", *EI*[2].

180 It is unclear when he lived, although he seems to have been a late author; see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 244-245.

181 On him see G. Strohmaier, "al-Djildakī", *EI*[2]; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 237-242; *id.*, *Katalog der arabischen alchemistischen Handschriften der Chester Beatty Library*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1974, I, p. 37-42, and index, s.v. "Ḍū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī".

182 Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 235; *id.*, *Katalog*, p. 80-83.

183 See, in addition to the references in the previous notes, Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 196-197.

to Ḏū l-Nūn, none of these poems contain any alchemical or occult motifs whatsoever. They rather deal with ascetical and mystical subjects, particularly the intimate relationship and passionate love between the mystic and God as well as the pain and grief that this love causes.[184] Brockelmann, Massignon, Ullmann and Van Ess have all cast doubt on the authenticity of the poems and works on alchemy which are attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn.[185] Evaluating their authenticity and establishing their exact provenance demand a meticulous philological examination which falls beyond the scope of this article.

One should also mention in this context Šihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā l-Suhrawardī (549/1154-587/1191), who added an important dimension to the esoteric image of Ḏū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī. In his *œuvre*, al-Suhrawardī presents Ḏū l-Nūn and several other 3rd/9th century Sufi teachers such as Sahl al-Tustarī as the "true philosophers and sages" of Islam, the heirs of Plato, Hermes and the Pythagorean tradition.[186] However, al-Suhrawardī's statements concerning Ḏū l-Nūn and other early Sufi figures have no historical value as regards the history of the Sufi tradition itself. Rather, these statements should only be understood in the context of al-Suhrawardī's teachings; in other words, they reflect Suhrawardī's own perception of the origins and development of the mystical-philosophical tradition in Islam.

The medieval image of Ḏū l-Nūn as a magician and alchemist who was influenced by the ancient Egyptian tradition was adopted by a number of modern scholars such as Reynold A. Nicholson (1868-1945)[187] and Miguel Asín

184 See above n. 89; see also al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 216-234.

185 See Brockelmann, GAL, I, p. 198-199 and Supplement, I, p. 214; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 197; Van Ess, "Biobibliographische Notizen", p. 100 and n. 10; see also J. Ruska, "Die Alchemie ar-Rāzī's", *Der Islam*, 22 (1935), p. 305; and Arberry, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, p. 87. Massignon (*Essay*, p. 143) refers to the alchemical works which are ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn as "apocryphal", and adds that "His authorship of a 'translation' of some hieroglyphs from Egyptian temples seems to be imaginary as well". Only Sezgin takes Ḏū l-Nūn's authorship of these alchemical works and poems for granted; see Sezgin, GAS, I, p. 643-644.

186 See Yaḥyā b. Ḥabaš al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-Talwīḥāt*, in *Maǧmūʿa fī l-ḥikma l-ilāhiyya*, ed. H. Corbin (= *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, I), Istanbul, Maarif matbaasi, 1945, p. 74 and n. 1; *id.*, *Kitāb al-Mašāriʿ wa-l-muṭāraḥāt*, in *ibid.*, p. 502-503; *id.*, *Kitāb Ḥikmat al-išrāq*, in *Maǧmūʿa-i dawwam-i muṣannafāt-i šaykh-i išrāq-i Šihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī dar ḥikmat-i ilāhī* (= *Opera metaphysica et mystica*, II), Teheran, Institut Franco-Iranien, 1952, p. 255 (and see also *ibid.*, p. 304-305); see also the analysis of these passages in Böwering, *The Mystical Vision*, p. 52-54.

187 See Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry", p. 311-315, especially *ibid.*, p. 313: "It is now clear that Dhu'l-Nún was an alchemist and magician, but we must remember that at this time magic and alchemy [...] had long been associated with theurgy and theosophy", and p. 315: "An

Palacios (1871-1944). The view of the latter is of particular interest to us here. According to Asín Palacios, the data in the sources concerning Ḏū l-Nūn's life and teachings "converges to make us suspect that this first patriarch and teacher of Muslim mysticism was not in reality more than the continuer of the Christian monastic tradition and of the Hermetic theosophy of ancient Egypt grafted into the Alexandrian esoterism".[188] Given that he was born and grew up in Upper Egypt with its rich religious heritage, it is only logical to assume that Ḏū l-Nūn was greatly influenced by both "Christian monastic asceticism" and the "traditional theosophical occultism of Egypt"; hence his knowledge in "alchemy and magic" as well as the "Hermetic art of deciphering the hieroglyphs of his country".[189] Asín Palacios further maintains that Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings greatly influenced Islamic mysticism, particularly the Andalusī "Pseudo-Empedoclean" tradition which was introduced into medieval Spain by Ibn Masarra (269/883-319/931). This tradition was later developed by the "School of Almería",[190] and culminated in the thought of the famous Muḥyī l-Dīn b. al-ʿArabī (560/1165-638/1240). Thus, in Asín Palacios's view, Ḏū l-Nūn functioned as a means or channel through which the ancient Hermetic tradition of Egypt, with its esoteric and occult sciences, entered Islamic mysticism, especially as it developed in al-Andalus. Ḏū l-Nūn "perhaps is the link between Islam and the triple tradition of the Hermetic, the Neo-Platonic, and the Christian of Egypt".[191] This theory of Asín Palacios (which originally appeared in his 1914 *Abenmasarra y su escuela*), more precisely, his speculations on the existence of the "School of Almería" and the so-called "Pseudo-Empedoclean" tradition, were severely criticized by later scholars.[192] However, Asín Palacios's

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ascetic, philosopher, and theurgist, living in the ninth century among the Christian Copts [...] such was Dhu'l-Nún al-Miṣrí, from whom [...] the Ṣúfí theosophy is mainly derived". See also the expression "theosophical mysticism of the Ṣúfis" in relation to Ḏū l-Nūn in *ibid*., p. 316.

188 Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 166.

189 *Ibid*., p. 165, 166.

190 That is, the school which, according to Asín Palacios, comprised of the Andalusī mystics Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-ʿArīf (d. 536/1141), Abū l-Ḥakam ʿAbd al-Salām b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Barrağān (d. 536/1141), Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mayūrqī (d. 537/1142) and Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. Qasī (d. 546/1151).

191 See Asín Palacios, *The Mystical Philosophy*, p. 40, 87, 128, 174. Note that like Nicholson, Asín Palacios too uses the term "theurgy" in relation to Ḏū l-Nūn; see *ibid*., p. 87, 128.

192 See A.E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din-Ibnul Arabi*, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964 (a reprint of the original 1939 Cambridge edition), p. 174-183; S.M. Stern, "Ibn Masarra, follower of Pseudo-Empedocles—an Illusion", in *id.*, *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought*, ed. F.W. Zimmermann, London, Variorum, 1983, article V (originally published

notions regarding the links between Ḏū l-Nūn, Neoplatonism and the Hermetic tradition seem to have attracted virtually no criticism at all.[193]

Despite his affirmation of the apocryphal nature of the alchemical works and poems attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn, Massignon too perceived Ḏū l-Nūn as a transmitter of ancient Hermetic knowledge and as a student of the occult-alchemical sciences, together with Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān.[194] The image of Ḏū l-Nūn the occultist is accepted as historically valid by other modern scholars as well.[195]

3 Conclusion

A fuller elaboration and closer examination of Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings, as well as a discussion of their role in the history of Sufi thought, must await further research. However, the survey in this article suffices to show the difficulty

in *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos, Coimbra-Lisboa 1 a 8 de Septembro de 1968*, Leiden, Brill, 1971, p. 325-337); C. Addas, "Andalusī Mysticism and the Rise of Ibn 'Arabī", in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. S.Kh. Jayyusi, Leiden, Brill, 1992, p. 909-933; D. De Smet, *Empedocles Arabus: Une lecture néoplatonicienne tardive*, Brussel, Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1998; cf. E. Tornero, "A Report on the Publication of Previously Unedited Works by Ibn Masarra", in *The Formation of al-Andalus, Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, eds M. Fierro and J. Samsó, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998, p. 145-149 (published originally in Spanish, "Noticia sobre la publicación de obras inéditas de Ibn Masarra", *Al-Qanṭara*, XIV (1993), p. 47-64); S. Stroumsa and S. Sviri, "The Beginnings of Mystical Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra and his *Epistle on Contemplation*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 36 (2009), p. 207-211.

193 Notwithstanding the impact of late antique Christianity on the development of the early Sufi tradition in general, and the possible encounters of Ḏū l-Nūn with Christian ascetics and mystics in particular, Asín Palacios was wrong in confusing this Christian impact with Hermetic and Neoplatonic influences; see the concluding Section of this article and Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 43-44.

194 See Massignon, *The Passion*, III, p. 353; *id.*, *Essay*, p. 141, where Ḏū l-Nūn is said to have been a disciple of Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān; cf. G. Böwering, "The Major Sources of Sulamī's Minor Qur'ān Commentary", *Oriens*, 35 (1996), p. 56 n. 151.

195 See, for example, M. Smith, "Ḏhu'l-Nūn", *EI*^{2}: "He made some study of medicine and also of alchemy and magic and he must have been influenced by Hellenistic teaching"; Melchert, "The Transition", p. 57 (cf. S. Sviri, "Sufism: Reconsidering Terms, Definitions and Processes in the Formative Period of Islamic Mysticism", in *Les Maîtres soufis et leurs disciples. III^e-V^e siècles de l'hégire* (*IX^e-XI^e s.*). *Enseignement, formation et transmission*, eds G. Gobillot and J.J. Thibon, Beirut, Presses de l'Ifpo, 2012, p. 17-34); Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 389-391; Mojaddedi, "Dhū l-Nūn"; cf. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision*, p. 54.

in (though not the impossibility of) reconstructing Ḏū l-Nūn's authentic teachings. From the numerous sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn and from the many anecdotes related to him in medieval Islamic literature as a whole, two figures emerge: the first figure is Ḏū l-Nūn the ascetic and mystic, whose teachings reflect what shortly after his death would become the main tenets of the Sufi tradition; and the second figure is Ḏū l-Nūn the magician and alchemist, who derived his occult knowledge from the ancient wisdom of Egypt, more precisely, from the pagan temples of Iḫmīm. The non-Sufi biographical dictionaries and particularly the Sufi works which were compiled in the central and eastern parts of the Islamic world from the 4th/10th century onwards know virtually nothing of Ḏū l-Nūn the magician and alchemist. The vast body of sayings attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn in these sources reveals practically no occult tendencies, and, what is more, it reflects a mystical approach which is at odds with many alchemical, Hermetic and theurgic conceptions. This approach, on the one hand, emphasizes the intimate and passionate relationship between the mystic and God, and, on the other, focuses on the ethical-psychological dimension of man, attaching great importance to the strict observance of the religious law. Accordingly, the figure of Ḏū l-Nūn which emerges from the Sufi sources and the non-Sufi biographical dictionaries is the exact opposite of what one would expect to find when looking for the figure of an alchemist, magician or theurgist. Rather than actively and boldly manipulating God's creation, the ideal mystic is portrayed by Ḏū l-Nūn as a passive, humble and *malāmatī* type of man, who, in his secret yet passionate communion with God, realizes his powerlessness and complete subordination to God's will and decree. His mystical achievements, particularly the Divine knowledge and the mystical states which are bestowed upon him, are the product of his passive, devotional stance, not of any alchemical or theurgical procedures.

To be sure, only two traditions in Sufi literature mention the word "alchemy" (*kīmiyā'*) in relation to Ḏū l-Nūn. In one of the two, Ḏū l-Nūn is quoted as saying: "He [...] who fills up the moat of desire [for worldly benefits] will attain the alchemy of the prudent ones [*kīmiyā' al-ḥazama*, or: the alchemy of prudence, *kīmiyā' al-ḥazma*]". However, the context of this saying is clearly ethical and ascetical, as is clear from other terms which appear in it such as *zuhd*, *waraʿ*, *ṣamt* and *ṣidq*.[196] The second tradition already reflects an awareness of the attempts to portray Ḏū l-Nūn as an alchemist, and so it assigns to the term

196 See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, IX, p. 380 (*man* [...] *wa-radama ḫandaq al-ḥirṣ ẓafira bi-kīmiyā' al-ḥazama* [...]); cf. Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, IV, p. 318 and Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 160, where the expression "the alchemy of serving [God, *kīmiyā' al-ḥidma*]" figures instead of "the alchemy of prudence". In yet another version, the term

"alchemy" a rather specific meaning. According to this tradition, when asked whether or not Ḏū l-Nūn practiced alchemy, Abū ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ǧalāʾ, who was Ḏū l-Nūn's disciple for a while,[197] gave the following answer: "yes, but he was an alchemist [who practiced] the alchemy of Ṣubayḥ al-Aswad".[198] When he was further questioned who Ṣubayḥ al-Aswad was, Ibn al-Ǧalāʾ replied that he was "a person who prayed the nightfall [prayer] in Baghdad and the [prayer of] daybreak in Mecca", in other words, he had the miraculous ability to travel great distances in a very short time, or to transpose himself from one distant place to another.[199] Hence, according to Ibn al-Ǧalāʾ, Ḏū l-Nūn was not an alchemist *per se*, but rather enjoyed miraculous powers, which, as I have emphasized above, are commonly attributed to the *awliyāʾ* in Sufi literature.

Is Ḏū l-Nūn the magician and alchemist a spurious and imaginary figure? A definitive answer to this question cannot be given without a thorough analysis of the aforementioned magical and alchemical works and poems which are attributed to Ḏū l-Nūn. Indeed, the possibility of a deliberate censorship on the part of the Sufi sources should not be overlooked: the occult teachings ascribed to Ḏū l-Nūn in the Arabic alchemical literature can be explained as the product of a secret, esoteric tradition which passed on from one generation to the next and which ultimately originated with Ḏū l-Nūn himself.

Yet it seems to me that the latter explanation is not plausible. To begin with, it is evident from al-Masʿūdī's report and the data concerning Ibn Umayl and Abū Ḥarrī ʿUṯmān b. Suwayd al-Iḫmīmī that the tradition concerning Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist, heir to the ancient, pagan wisdom of Iḫmīm, originated in the first half of the 4th/10th century in Egypt, among scholars who dealt with alchemy and magic. These scholars were probably active in Iḫmīm, which was after all a center for both the alchemical and Hermetic traditions, ever since the days of Zosimus of Panopolis (= Iḫmīm).[200] It is possible that Abū Ḥarrī

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kīmiyāʾ does not appear at all; see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Maknūn*, p. 117 (*wa-man* […] *wa-radama ḫandaq al-ḥirṣ ẓafira bi-kitmān al-ḫudʿa*).

197 On him see, for example, al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 144-147.

198 I was unable to find any information concerning this person.

199 See Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Kawkab al-durrī*, p. 243-244 (*qāla ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī l-Bāḫīnsī* (*?*) *al-Abharī qāla samiʿtu l-Ḥasan b. Naṣr Muḥammad b. ʿAlī l-muqriʾ bi-Ṭarsūs qāla samiʿtu ʿUmar b. al-Ḥammāl wa-qāla li-Abī ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ǧalāʾ wa-anā ḥāḍir yā Abā ʿAbd Allāh kāna Ḏū l-Nūn yaʿmalu l-kīmiyāʾ fa-qāla lahu Abū ʿAbd Allāh naʿam wa-lākinnahu kīmiyāʾī kīmiyāʾ Ṣubayḥ al-Aswad fa-qāla lahu ʿUmar wa-man Ṣubayḥ al-Aswad qāla insān ṣallā l-ʿatama bi-Baġdād wa-l-ġadāt bi-Makka*).

200 See Plessner, "The Place of the Turba Philosophorum," p. 334; Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy*, p. 59, 389 and the references given there; see also the refernces in B. Bitton-Ashkelony, "Counseling through Enigmas: Monastic Leadership and Linguistic Techniques in Sixth-

l-Iḫmīmī and/or Ibn Umayl themselves were the ones who were responsible for propagating the tradition of Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist. By adopting the figure of Ḏū l-Nūn—a local saint who combined ascetical-mystical teachings with a strict orthodox commitment to the Koran and the *sunna*—Abū Ḥarrī l-Iḫmīmī and/or Ibn Umayl were perhaps seeking to justify and legitimize their own preoccupation with the occult sciences. The relatively unknown background of Ḏū l-Nūn—as is evident from the virtual lack of biographical details concerning his early life—enabled these alchemists to portray the young Ḏū l-Nūn as wandering about in the *barābī* of Iḫmīm, deciphering their hieroglyphs and even serving a pagan priest—thereby retrieving the lost occult knowledge of the pre-Islamic heritage.

Moreover, the second half of the 3rd/9th century and the first half of the 4th/10th was precisely the period in which the Ǧābirian corpus was compiled.[201] The alchemical teachings in this corpus were likewise attributed to a legendary figure—Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān, the alleged disciple of the well-known Shiite Imam Ǧaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765)—in a similar attempt to win legitimacy. Hence, the emergence of the tradition of Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist in the first half of the 4th/10th century fits in well with the history of Arabic alchemy as outlined by modern scholars. Conversely, to accept the figure of Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist as historically valid would mean that Arabic alchemy had already developed in the first half of the 3rd/9th century—an implausible supposition.

Save for Ibn al-Nadīm, the link between Ḏū l-Nūn and the world of alchemy is mainly drawn by Egyptian, North African and Andalusī authors who lived from the 5th/11th century onwards. In fact, it seems that the tradition of Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist, originally born in Egypt, reached al-Andalus already during the 4th/10th century.[202] However, one must bear in mind that Ḏū

Century Gaza", in *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign*, eds S. La Porta and D. Shulman, Leiden, Brill, 2007, p. 189.

201 See the references above in n. 165.

202 Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), who, according to M. Fierro, was the real author of the alchemical-occult works *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm* and *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, transmitted in al-Andalus a treatise related to Ḏū l-Nūn which he had initially studied in the east (Baṣra); see M. Fierro, "Bāṭinism in Al-Andalus: Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), Author of the *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* and the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Picatrix)", *Studia Islamica* 84 (1996), p. 90; and *id.*, "The Polemic about the *Karāmāt al-Awliyāʾ* and the Development of Ṣūfism in al-Andalus (Fourth/Tenth-Fifth/Eleventh Centuries)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55/2 (1992), p. 246. However, from the title of this work (*Suʾāl Ḏī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī baʿḍ al-zuhhād ʿan ṣifat al-muʾmin*), one may infer that this treatise did not deal with occult matters but rather with ascetical issues. Be that as it may, Ḏū l-Nūn is indeed mentioned in *Rutbat al-ḥakīm* as an authority on alchemical matters, together

l-Nūn's authentic, ascetical-mystical teachings were also known in al-Andalus.[203] From the 7th/13th century onwards, the image of Ḏū l-Nūn the occultist figures in various writings on alchemy and in historiographical, geographical and *adab* works, mostly of a North African and Egyptian provenance. Could the persistence of the tradition concerning Ḏū l-Nūn the alchemist in the western part of the Islamic world be due to the presence in these lands of the Ismāʿīlī-Fatimid Empire, which ruled in North Africa and Egypt during the 4th/10th-6th/12th centuries? It was, after all, the Shiite-Ismāʿīlī milieu that gave rise to the Ǧābirian corpus and to *Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (*The Epistles of the Sincere Brethren*), two corpora which were greatly influenced by the Neoplatonic, Hermetic and Pythagorean/Neopythagorean traditions.[204] There is evidence

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with (*inter alia*) Hermes, Plato and Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān. Note that these names also figure in Ibn al-Nadīm's *al-Fihrist* and in Ibn Umayl's *al-Māʾ al-waraqī* (see above n. 165-166); see P. Carusi, "Le Traité alchimique *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*. Quelques notes sur son introduction", in *Religion Versus Science in Islam: a Medieval and Modern Debate* (= *Oriente Moderno* 19/3), ed. C. Baffioni, Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente, 2001, p. 494, n. 8; see also *ibid*., p. 498; and Ullmann, *Katalog*, p. 204-205.

203 See the previous note and the references in this article to Ibn al-ʿArabī's works, al-Qurṭubī's *Tafsīr* and Ibn Baškuwāl's *al-Ṣila*. Note that according to Ibn al-Faraḍī (in his *Taʾrīḫ ʿulamāʾ al-Andalus*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī, Cairo, Dār al-kitāb al-miṣrī, 1989, II, p. 687-688, n. 1202), Ibn Masarra's ethical-psychological teachings resembled those of Ḏū l-Nūn and Abū Yaʿqūb al-Nahraǧūrī (d. 330/941; *wa-kāna maʿa ḏālika yaddaʿī l-takallum ʿalā taṣḥīḥ al-aʿmāl wa-muḥāsabat al-nufūs ʿalā ḥaqīqat al-ṣidq fī naḥw min kalām Ḏī l-Nūn al-Iḫmīmī wa-Abī Yaʿqūb al-Nahraǧūrī*). However, contrary to Asín Palacios' understanding (see the references above in n. 191), Ibn al-Faraḍī's statement does not imply that Ibn Masarra was necessarily influenced by the teachings of Ḏū l-Nūn nor that these teachings were of an alchemical-occult nature. See the discussion and references in Stroumsa and Sviri, "The Beginnings", p. 201-215.

204 On the Iḫwān and the Hermetic tradition, see Y. Marquet, "Sabéens et Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ", *Studia Islamica*, 24 (1966), p. 35-80, and 25 (1966), p. 77-109; H. Corbin, "Sabian Temple and Ismailism", in *id.*, *Temple and Contemplation*, transl. Ph. Sherrard, London, KPI, 1986, p. 132-182; Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, p. 168-171, 179-181, 183, 222, 227, 237; T.M. Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran*, Leiden, Brill, 1992, p. 139-141, 171, 181-190, 207-214; F.E. Peters, "Hermes and Harran: the Roots of Arabic-Islamic Occultism", in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, eds M.M. Mazzaoui and V.B. Moreen, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1990, p. 196-198; I.R. Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity* (*Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1982, p. 50-52; S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for its Study by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, al-Bīrūnī, and Ibn Sīnā*, Boulder, Shambhala, 1978 (revised edition), p. 33-40; Joosse, "An Example of Medieval Arabic Pseudo-Hermetism", p. 289-293; G. Widengren, "The Gnostic Technical Language in the Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ", in *Actas*

that Ǧābirian works were indeed present in Egypt[205] and that the Fatimid library in Cairo held occult writings treating of alchemy and astrology.[206] Similarly, the Ǧābirian corpus and *Rasā'il Iḫwān al-Ṣafā'* were both quite influential in al-Andalus.[207]

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do IV Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos, Coimbra-Lisboa 1 a 8 de Septembro de 1968, Leiden, Brill, 1971, especially p. 182, 193-194, 200-203. On the Iḫwān and the Pythagorean/Neopythagorean tradition, see Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, p. 9-16; Nasr, *An Introduction*, p. 33-40, p. 45 n. 5, p. 47-51, 77-78, 84; M. Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004[3], p. 170-175; and, regarding the Neoplatonism of the Iḫwān, see, for example, the references in this note to the studies by Netton and Nasr. Concerning the Ǧābirian corpus, see Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, II, p. 135-185, 270-303, and index, s.v. "hermétisme", "néopythagorisme", "pythagoricien" and "pythagorisme".

205 See Ṣā'id al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, p. 61 (*wa-aḫbaranī Muḥammad b. l-Sa'īd al-Saraqusṭī l-ma'rūf bi-Bn al-Maššāṭ al-Asṭurlābī annahu ra'ā li-Ǧābir b. Ḥayyān bi-madīnat Miṣr ta'līfan fī l-'amal bi-l-asṭurlāb taḍammana alf mas'ala lā naẓīr lahu*).

206 According to a report quoted by H. Halm (*The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning*, London, I.B. Tauris-The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1997, p. 92), in the Fatimid library in Cairo were found works on astronomy, alchemy and *ruḥāniyyāt*, a term denoting "the spiritual powers [of the planets]"; on this term, see Sh. Pines, "On the Term Ruḥaniyot and its Sources and on the Doctrine of Yehuda Ha-Levi", *Tarbiz*, 57 (1988), p. 511-540 (in Hebrew). In addition, it is noteworthy that Ibn Umayl may have been a Shiite (see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 217; Starr, "Towards a Context for Ibn Umayl", p. 70). Finally, mention should be made of a work on alchemy entitled *Kitāb Ta'wīḏ al-Ḥākim fī 'ilm al-ṣan'a l-'āliya* (*The Book of al-Ḥākim's Amulet Concerning the Science of the Noble Art*). The author or compiler of this work attributes its alchemical teachings to the Fatimid-Ismā'īlī Caliphs-Imams al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh (ruled 386/996-411/1021) and al-Mu'izz (341/953-365/975), and, ultimately, to Ǧa'far al-Ṣādiq (see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, p. 221; Sezgin, *GAS*, IV, p. 293). This attribution is obviously false, but nevertheless may testify to a link between the Fatimids and the study of alchemy in North Africa.

207 Their impact can be seen, for example, in the Andalusī works *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm* and *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*, which likewise treat of magic, astrology and alchemy, and which were composed, according to Fierro, already in the mid-10th century. See Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, I, p. xli n. 7; *id.*, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*, II, p. 63 n. 6, p. 104 n. 12, p. 106 n. 8, p. 173 n. 1, p. 193 n. 11; H. Ritter and M. Plessner, *Picatrix: Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magriti*, London, Warburg Institute, 1962, p. xx-lxxv; Plessner, "Hermes Trismegistus", p. 57-58; D. Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 43 (1980), p. 2-3; Fierro, "Bāṭinism in Al-Andalus", p. 94, 96, 106; A. Hamdani, "Brethren of Purity, a Secret Society for the Establishment of the Fāṭimid Caliphate: New Evidence for the Early Dating of their Encyclopaedia", in *L'Égypte fatimide: son art et son histoire. Actes du colloque organisé à Paris les 28, 29 et 30 mai 1998 / sous la direction de Marianne Barrucand*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999, p. 73, 75. For the Iḫwānian influence on various Muslim and Jewish Andalusī authors, see

Finally, one must also consider the issue of typology. Medieval authors such as Ibn al-Nadīm, Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī and al-Suhrawardī, as well as a number of modern scholars, make no attempt to distinguish between the Sufi tradition and other mystical trends in Islam. The Sufi tradition—at least as reflected in classical Sufi literature which was composed in the central and eastern parts of the Islamic world up to the rise of Ibn al-ʿArabī—should not be confused with other mystical movements that were indeed influenced by the Hermetic, Pythagorean/Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic traditions, and which were naturally more predisposed towards the occult. The early Shiite-Ismāʿīlī milieu played a central role in the development of this Hermetic, Pythagorean/Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic type of mysticism, as is clear from the Ǧābirian corpus, *Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafāʾ* and various other Shiite-Ismāʿīlī works.[208] In contradistinction, Ḏū l-Nūn's teachings as reflected in Sufi literature and in Non-Sufi biographical dictionaries seem to have little to do with this type of mysticism.

For the moment, however, and until further research is carried out, the opinion presented here concerning the figure of Ḏū l-Nūn the occultist must remain a hypothesis in need of corraboration.

M. Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus. Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Ismāʿīlī Tradition*, Leiden, Brill, 2014, index, s.v. "Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ "; and see also Godefroid de Callataÿ, "Magia en al-Andalus: Rasāʾil Iǰwān al-Ṣafāʾ, Rutbat al-Ḥakīm y Gāyat al-Ḥakīm (Picatrix)", *Al-Qanṭara*, 34/2 (2013), p. 297-343.

208 See, for example, H. Halm, *Kosmologie und Heilslehre der frühen Ismāʿīlīya: eine Studie zur islamischen Gnosis*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1978.